My First Eighty Years

Bernard Horwich

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MY FIRST EIGHTY YEARS

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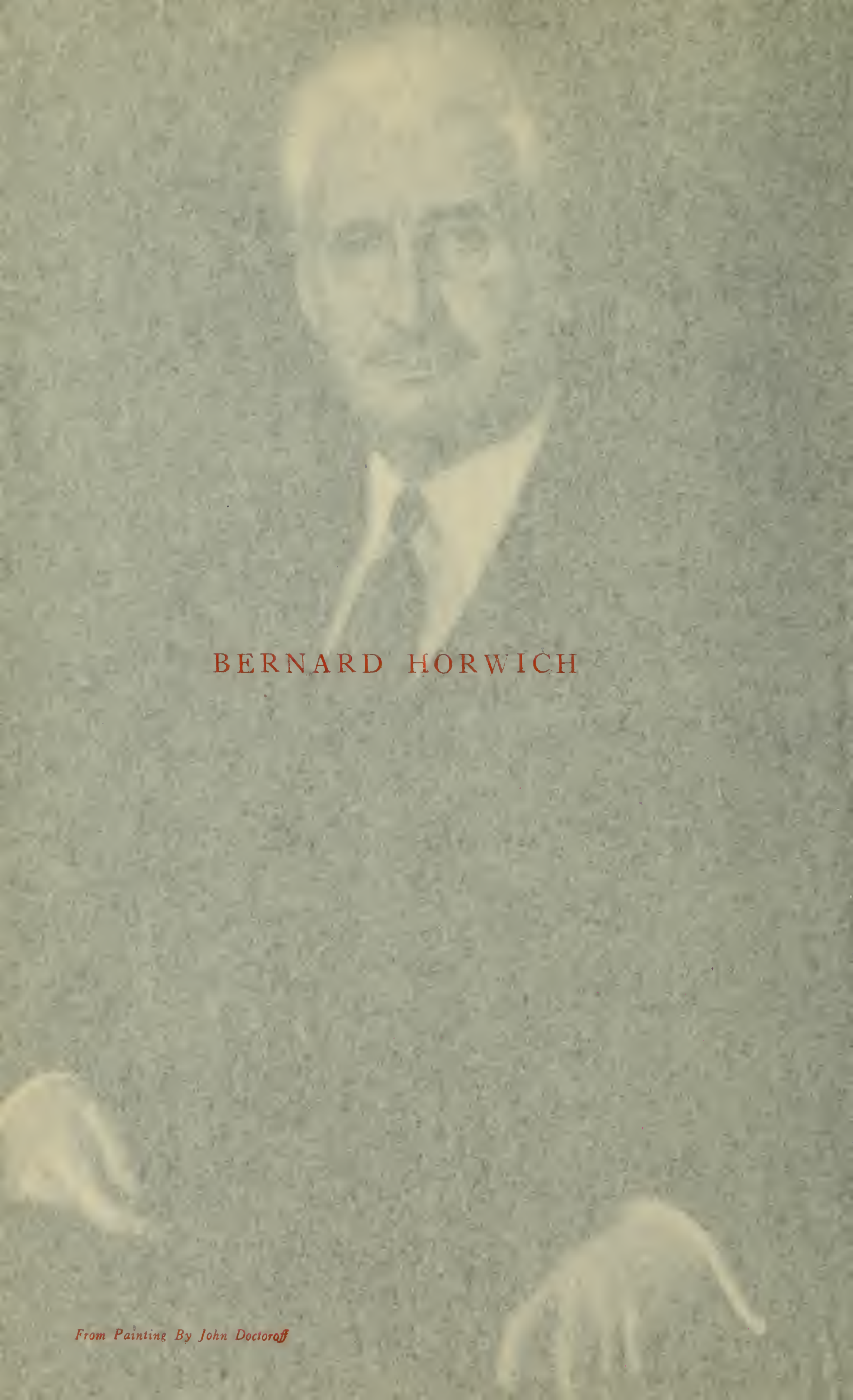
By

BERNARD HORWICH

CHICAGO
ARGUS BOOKS
1939



BERNARD HORWICH

From Painting By John Doctoroff

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BERNARD HORWICH

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In loving memory of five brothers, this volume is reverently dedicated by the sixth.

"REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD,
CONSIDER THE YEARS OF MANY GENERATIONS:
ASK THY FATHER, AND HE WILL DECLARE UNTO THEE;
THINE ELDERS, AND THEY WILL TELL THEE."

DEUTERONOMY: XXXII, 7

INTRODUCTION

European Jewry, up to a generation or so ago, was divided into two cultural groupings. Generally speaking, the Jews of Eastern Europe lived under the influence of the traditional Jewish culture and the Jews of Western Europe under the influence of the modern Western culture. The non-Jewish environment in the towns and villages of Russia was at a far lower level than that of the Jews, whereas the general cultural and scientific level in Western Europe was higher than that of the Jews. This difference created a profound divergence in mood between Eastern Jews and Western Jews. The Jews of the East naturally concluded that their inherited Talmudic culture was vastly superior in content, mood and educative power to that of the world around them, and therefore, choosing the higher culture, they became intensely Jewish and lived on from generation to generation as if the outer world did not exist. They were quite right in their choice; they had selected the higher culture. The Jews of the West also chose what seemed to them to be the higher culture, which in their case was the culture of the environment. They abandoned the Talmud; they flocked to the universities and became authors of German, French, English literature. They soon grew to be more European than Jewish. The fault of the Eastern Jew was that he scorned modernity; the fault of the Western Jew was that he withdrew from history.

The finest mental and spiritual types in modern Jewish life came from a combination of both tendencies. The Jews of Galicia, for example, had the old East European Talmudic culture but being part of the Austrian Empire, assimilated, likewise, modern scientific thinking. So, too, many of the Jews from Russia and Poland moved into Western environments and the choicest spirits among them, without abandoning the inherited past, added to it that which was best in the thought and mood of the modern world.

Bernard Horwich represents the fine type of Eastern Jew who lives worthily in both worlds. The profound Jewishness of his Lithuanian environment became a permanent part of his personality. It has never been eradicated. All his interest in intensely Jewish causes grows from the soil of his childhood. But his attitudes and activities have grown up in the atmosphere of America and without losing their vigor are modified in type. Like the typical Western Jew, he has a sense of discipline, order and progress. He is a leader in all causes which involve new and practical understanding of the changing problems of Jewish and American life.

I always was happy to see him in the congregation when I preached in Chicago. Those Talmudic and Midrashic references which a rabbi feels impelled to embody in his sermons and addresses and which are generally meaningless to the average member of the congregation, were always familiar and meaningful to him. I always felt that, Jewishly, he and I spoke the same language. Also, the new application of the old ideals to the changing mood of present-day life never seemed unwarranted or heretical to him because he is profoundly a modern man.

I am happy to write these few words of introduction to his memoirs. He represents to me the fine type of Jew who lives in the modern world knowing that the sources of his strength come from an older world. Bernard Horwich has won the West without losing the East.

SOLOMON B. FREEHOF.

May 5, 1939.

PREFACE

About three years ago, for the first time in my life, I had the experience of being really ill. For about seven weeks, I was laid up with pneumonia. This being a dangerous illness, especially for one of my age, it caused me to think of many things that I had previously had little time to dwell upon.

Through the long days and nights, as I lay helpless, knowing my recovery to be doubtful, the complete panorama of my life unrolled before my vision.

It was at the age of five that I first became conscious of myself as an individual, and in my mind's eye I went over all that had happened to me in my seventy-odd years of activity since then. Living over the details of my life, and taking inventory, as it were, of the entire scene, I came to this conclusion—that if all the pleasures and joys I had experienced were put on one side of a scale, and all the trials, sorrows and anxieties on the other side, the latter would greatly overbalance the former.

It has certainly not been an easy road that I have traveled, and my chief consolation has ever been in my hope for the future. Always, when beset by difficulties, or grieving over past disappointments, I have raised my spirits by looking forward to a better tomorrow.

Now, as I lay ill, it seemed that there might not be another tomorrow for me. I began to feel despondent, although not through fear of death. I have never been afraid of dying. Whenever I felt refreshed after a good night's sleep, I remembered the saying of the Talmud, that sleep is only the sixtieth part of death. If sleep is so wonderful a rest, being but the sixtieth part of death, how peaceful must death itself be!

No, it was not fear of death that made me sad. It was that I was brought forcibly face to face with the realization of the emptiness of life. Over and over in my mind ran the sayings of Koheleth, son of David:

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

"A man hath no pre-eminence above a beast, for all is vanity. All go unto one place. All are of the dust and all turn to dust again."

"One generation passeth on—another generation cometh."

Lying there, weak and ill, I felt that I was indeed of the "generation that passeth on." And I began to meditate upon how long I would be remembered after I was gone, and what would be said of me.

From what I had observed in the case of other men, who had preceded me—men who had been active in public life and well known in their communities—I had a fair idea of what would happen. There would be some who would praise me, and some who would find fault. Some would be sorry, and some would feel pleased because it was I and not they who had departed. But most, I knew, would be indifferent, and within a short time, like those others I had known, I would be forgotten.

It was then that I determined, if I recovered, to leave something behind so that my name might be remembered at least by the present and future members of my own family. I recalled that I had often been urged by various friends, at different times, to write down the experiences of my life, which they felt would be of interest to many, and I decided that, should I regain my health and strength, I would set about this task. That was the first time I gave serious consideration to the idea.

As I gave the matter further thought, I began to realize that the biographies of the world have been concerned chiefly with individuals of extreme types. The accomplishments of the great and powerful, for good or bad, have been widely recorded throughout history. The greatness of a Washington or Lincoln, the tyranny of an Ivan, the Terrible, or a Hitler, have occupied the attention of the majority of writers. But neglected, as a rule, has been the vast middle class — the acknowledged backbone of civilization — and in my book I decided to present the lives, the hopes, the dreams and aspirations of a middle-class family, believing that their accomplishments, too, were of interest and value.

My further purpose, I determined, would be to portray the lives of the Jews of the Old World and their adjustment to the New. The period with which I was chiefly concerned was that during which hundreds of thousands of poor immigrants, I among them, came to America to seek their fortunes, with the eager hope that here in this new land of freedom, they and their descendants might fare better than in the old lands of persecution and intolerance. I wanted to explain how this uprooting and transplanting, this imposing of one civilization and way of living upon another, had varied effects, both serious and humorous; how some of these immigrants were bewildered by this strange new world, and how the great majority rose above the difficulties they encountered, adjusted themselves to their new environment, and not only found a place in it, but even contributed largely, in all fields of endeavor, to the upbuilding of their adopted country. The valuable contributions of this group as a whole should, I felt, be pointed out particularly to the American-born citizens of this country, who tend to regard their foreign-born compatriots as intruders and not entitled to the same benefits that they enjoy.

I wished to explain, too, how the untrained Jewish immigrant was forced, as I was, not by choice but by necessity, into industry and business, when he found other means of employment closed to him.

This is how the book came to be. I hope that others — members of middle-class Jewish families like my own, will follow my example, and record their accomplishments for posterity. Thus may the world be made aware of the contributions of this important but hitherto silent class to the progress of humanity.

Having been the first to come to this country, I have been called the "Columbus" of my family, which now numbers about three hundred and fifty members in America. Among them are working men, professional men and business men. Some have done better than others, but they are all of the middle class. In all these years, among all of them, there is not one I know of who has come in conflict with the law — with the lone exception of my dear brother Harris, whose humorous experience when he was accused of keeping boxes of empty bottles on the sidewalk in front of his place of business, is related in this book.

I am under no illusion that my book is a masterpiece, or that it has any great merit. It has been written chiefly from memory, and by a mind not so alert as formerly. I will be pleased if it is better received than I anticipate.

It was during my above-mentioned illness, also, that I decided to have executed the oil painting of me which appears as the frontispiece of this volume. It is the work of the eminent artist, Mr. John Doctoroff, who has, I am afraid, done me more than justice.

There was another ambition that possessed me at the time of my illness — one that I hope I shall live to see accomplished — and that is to witness a change of government in Nazi Germany, where the hope of our people, and of humanity at large, has been so horribly crushed.

I pray that the time is not far off when the people of the world, and chiefly the leaders of the people, will at last realize that we are all children of one God — that He created us all, in the same form; when the strong will not take advantage of the weak, nor the mighty use their power to oppress and crush the defenseless; when it is acknowledged that there is room in the world for all people to live happily together.

August. 1939.

BERNARD HORWICH.

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CHAPTER I

MY BOYHOOD IN PONIEMON

Lithuania, a little bit of a country, with a present population of only about two and a half million, lies wedged in between three strong and none too amicable neighbors: Communist Russia, Nazi Germany and Poland. Formerly Lithuania was a part of the Czarist Empire. The World War and the Russian Revolution brought about its independence, however, so that now it paddles its own canoe.

The river Niemon, the Rubicon of the 1812 Napoleonic campaign, passes near Kaunas (once called Kovno). It is the capital city and metropolis of this country, and has a population of over 100,000, of which one-fourth are Jews.

Kovno was and still is the seat of the greatest rabbinate of diaspora Jewry. In my time it was presided over by the then famous and even now unforgotten Rabbi Itzchak Elchanan Spektor, whose vast learning and great wisdom made him the outstanding rabbinic figure of his generation.

Across the river from Kovno lies the hamlet of Poniemon (in Polish it means "on the Niemon"). Here is where my story begins.

This obscure village, which never grew to more than a hundred families, was the place of my birth. Here I arrived as an unwelcome guest to my mother, for already possessing two sons, she was very anxious that I be a girl. She had prayed, had had other people pray, and had contributed to charity, all in the hope that the Almighty would send her a pretty baby girl for her third child, instead of a boy, especially one that turned out as unattractive as I.

It was in this hamlet that I first learned life's hardships, and the weaknesses, the intolerance and the selfishness of human beings. There I got my first taste, too, of what it means to be a Jew. There, also, my parents peacefully rest in their graves.

Hence, little Poniemon, next to America, is dearest to my heart, and remains engraved in my memory forever.

My little city had but a single street, four blocks long. This was bisected in the center by a square block of land, divided into two parts. One part was of pure sand, and was called the Sand Islet. The other part, which contained a few dozen trees and some grass, was called the Grove, or the Woods. For that reason, the people of the town considered this thoroughfare to be two streets. Each one called the place where he lived "This Street," and the opposite end "The Other Street."

The section coming from Kovno had a Jewish cemetery at its starting point, while at the extreme end on the other side was the Catholic cemetery. The street with the Jewish cemetery had a small House of Worship for daily prayer and a large Synagogue for holidays or for special festivals. The street with the Catholic cemetery had another small Jewish house of prayer, but a very sizeable Catholic Church to accommodate the peasants streaming in from miles around, for in Poniemon itself there were only four Christian families.

The river Niemon starts from somewhere in Russia and runs through a part of Lithuania, through East Prussia, into the Baltic Sea. For the inhabitants of our town, the river had advantages and disadvantages the whole year round. During the summer months the people had a place in which to bathe, to catch fish and to enjoy life generally; but the disadvantage was that, since there was no bridge across the river to Kovno, they had to pay for being taken across in a rowboat.

This business of taking passengers up and back from Kovno across the river was the cause of a great deal of friction. The representatives of the community had to decide who should get the contract for the privilege. An elderly man, by the name of Itzel, had a sort of monopoly on it, and as soon as spring came and the river was cleared of ice, there were a great many quarrels and arguments as to why this Itzel should be the privileged character. It was quite a business, and would bring in about two hundred roubles (one hundred dollars) for the season of six months. The people were always left dissatisfied, no matter how the controversy ended.

In the winter, the river would freeze, so that the people could not only walk across, but also ride across on sleds. However, the danger of the river overflowing in the spring, when the ice started to break up, would always create anxiety and fear. Often the river would rise and overflow to such a distance that many of the houses were greatly damaged. The whole town would then be cut off from Kovno, which meant from the world.

Among the Jewish notables of the town was Rabbi Avremil, a man of deep piety, great learning and good common sense; also Moshe, Velvel and Abram Feinberg, of the Shatenstein family, who leased tracts of forest land from the Russian Government, felled the trees and exported the finished timber, chiefly to Germany. Abram, called Avremzik, was the "prince" of this family. In addition to being a good business man, he was also a perfect gentleman and scholar, not only learned in Hebrew but in world literature as well — a man highly respected for his piety, honesty and modesty.

The four brothers of the Bregstone family, Selig, Shaane, Abram and Moshe, known to us as "the Bregstones of the mountain," were also among the outstanding men of the town. They had a farm in the hills nearby, which supplied them with their provisions. They tried their luck in business, but without great success. Though not rich, they were looked upon as "well-to-do" and good men. The brothers were partners in all their ventures, and there never was any friction or misunderstanding among them or their children. This in itself was proof of the fine temper of the family.

The other men in public life in my town, besides the Rabbi, were two teachers, a cantor, and a "shochet." A shochet is one who kills chickens, or cattle, in accordance with Jewish traditions. There was also a barber, who acted as assistant to the physicians, whenever one came to town. We likewise boasted a synagogue beadle, a store keeper, two tailors, a shoemaker and a blacksmith. The remainder were what we call "windmen," or jacks of all trades.

One of the interesting characters of Poniemon, whose activities shed some light on the life of my native town seventy years ago, was Yehuda Yamkeles, the Jewish night watchman.

During the day the village was protected by a man appointed by the "voit," or mayor. Though not a Jew, he loved Jewish food. His appetite was always good, and his thirst great, and being an "official" of the town, he managed to get all the food and drink he could stand. Since no offense against the law was ever known to have been committed in our community, this policeman had nothing to do but spend his time going from house to house, greeting everybody and getting something to eat or drink.

At night, however, since no official protection was provided, the leaders of the town thought it important to employ a night watchman; but I am sure Yehuda Yamkeles thought differently, for in all the years he was so employed, nothing ever happened to disturb the peaceful sleep of the townspeople.

Our watchman was a tall, lanky, overgrown man of about seventy, bent by ill health. A victim of asthma, his breathing was so bad that he could hardly speak. His duties were to go through the streets from one end to the other three times a night; but since this was too strenuous for him, he would walk only a little way, and then shout at the top of his voice, "Beware, I, the night watchman, am here," in order to frighten thieves away.

This candidate for the grave was the guard and protector of our city from sunset to sunrise. His chief problem was how to kill time, but since he knew the Psalms by heart, he would spend the nights reciting Psalms and praying to God for the welfare of the Jewish people throughout the world.

My parents' families were, from the material point of view, only a trifle above the level of the poor, but were known to be very honest. I always feel proud of the fact that character, not wealth, was the measure of a man in this little hamlet. Although seventy-five per cent of the population lived in the direst poverty, regard for one's fellowman was based not on his possessions, but on his learning, piety and honesty.

My father was not a native of Poniemon. He came there as a young man to study the Talmud and acquire Jewish knowledge in general, and being poor, was supported during this period, as was their wont, by the Jewish townspeople. Seven families, who could afford it and were willing to do so, obligated themselves to provide his meals on successive days of the week. This method of providing food for poor students was customary throughout Jewry. Such students were known as guests or "day-eaters." Since many of these families were themselves very poor, it was arranged that each student should have a fair provision of food for at least three days a week. For example, if he had a poor Monday, with an impoverished family, he was compensated by having a good Tuesday, with a family better situated, and so on.

It so happened that my father had one of his "eating days" at the house of Grandfather David Horwich, where my mother lived, and according to reports, she decided she would marry him. It was not a question of falling in love. God forbid! Talk of love in those days was considered wicked and immoral. No Jewish girl would dare to mention the word. She wanted to marry him because he was a good student, pious, modest and well liked by the good people of the town, especially by the Rabbi. She had her way.

Father was indeed an exceptional man in many ways. He was a scholar, with a modern tendency — religious, yet not fanatic, and well versed in all matters of Jewish knowledge. A mild, easygoing, unassuming, gentle soul, he took things as they came and never complained or quarreled, nor did he envy any man. Two incidents in his life more fully describe his fine character.

One day, while returning from Kovno, where he had gone to look for a position, he found one hundred roubles (fifty dollars) in cash. In those days such a sum was a little fortune, especially to a poor man. He was at that time the father of three children, and the most he had ever earned, when he had employment, was five roubles a week. With a hundred roubles he could have brought much pleasure and comfort to his home; yet he did not bring the money home, nor did he say anything about his find to my mother. He hid the money and then told people he understood someone in Kovno or nearby had lost a large sum. For two months he spread this tale, in the hope that he would thereby learn the name of the loser.

However, as no inquiry was made, he went to see Rabbi Spektor of Kovno (known even to this day as one of the great Gaonim in Israel), and telling him his story, asked for advice. The Rabbi undertook to announce the find, without stating the amount or giving information as to where it was found, and further announced that the owner could have the money by giving proof that it was his. For two months the news was spread about, yet no one responded. At the expiration of the set time, since no claimant had appeared, the Rabbi informed my father that he could keep the money as his own.

When father came home and told the story to mother, and showed her the hundred roubles in cash, she almost fainted. For a while she was mute, and when she finally recovered her composure, she murmured these words:

"Oh, God, please do not punish a feeble woman for her wicked words; but I cannot help saying, dear God, that while I thank Thee day and night for giving me a husband who is such a pious and saintly man, yet I ask, why didst Thou make him such an idiot? Why didst Thou not give him a little more sense to understand that poor people do not have so much money, and that when they do have it, they don't lose it — they will watch it every minute, day and night. The one who lost this money must be a very rich man — only Thou, great God, knowest how rich he is, and that he can well afford to lose it. Here we are, struggling and slaving in wretched poverty for our daily bread, while my husband, the saint, walks around for four months with a hundred roubles in his pocket, looking for the millionaire who lost it, without saying a word to his wife about it!"

The second incident occurred as follows: There was in Poniemon a man known as Itzig, a very shrewd and unscrupulous individual. He managed to make money in all kinds of ventures and schemes, and was always looking for more and more business. My father came to him with a very good project, which required capital. Itzig investigated the proposition very carefully, and decided to go into it. The understanding was that it should be a "fifty-fifty" arrangement, Itzig to furnish the money and my father to run the business, with the profits to be divided equally.

Father, having complete faith in everyone, did not think to put their arrangement in writing. The business was duly started and proved to be very profitable, and father thought he would soon be a man of wealth. After two years, when he proposed they divide the profits, as the books showed a considerable sum of surplus cash on hand, Itzig answered that he never did and never would divide profits with anyone; furthermore, he did not want to have my father in business with him any longer, and he told him to leave. As compensation for the time my father had devoted to running the business, Itzig allowed him ten roubles a week, claiming this was the highest salary father had ever made before starting with him.

The people who knew about the deal were furious over this outrage, but my father only smiled and said:

"I am glad that I was instrumental in making that man happy." And the more money Itzig subsequently made, the happier father was, because he had been responsible for bringing him into the business.

For forty years, father was employed as an expert and trusted aid by merchants in the lumber and timber industry. His salary, which was never more than fifty roubles (twenty-five dollars) a month, was in those days considered good pay; but it was far from enough for a large family to live on, and mother had to help along by earning money in various enterprises. Fortunately, however, when he reached the age of about sixty, he did not have to worry about earning a living, as he was provided with from eighty-five to one hundred dollars a month by his five sons in Chicago.

On his deathbed, at the age of eighty-seven, as we were later informed by the Rabbi of the town, father prayed with tears in his eyes for the health and happiness of his children, their children and all good people of the world. He had one of the greatest funerals the city had ever known. The leaders of his people carried him to his grave, and the whole town mourned his death.

Mother was by temperament just the opposite of father. She was nervous, clever, restless, obstinate, quick-tempered, and very active. She was capable of working from early morning until late at night for her husband and children, never thinking of herself, thus impairing her health. Like most Jewish women of those days, she had not been educated. Ordinary education then meant knowing how to write and read Yiddish, and how to read the prayers in Hebrew; but even this was only for men and not for women. She knew and observed, however, in every particular, all the rules and laws pertaining to the Jewish religion and her duties as a wife and mother.

Her husband was everything in the world to her. She worshipped the ground he trod on. He came first in everything — the best food, drink and clothes were only for him. While she ate bread and potatoes and herring, she prepared fish and meat for him. She cherished him but tried by every possible device to hide her affection for him. She would often chide and reprimand him for not being more aggressive — for being a "shlemiel" and letting everybody get the best of him; and then would go to some corner and pray to God that her husband would not think ill of her for being rude to him.

The name of God was always on her lips. Always when she was about to start gossiping with other women, she would begin: "May God not punish me for what I am about to say," or "I hope God will not consider it a sin, the words I am about to utter," or before planning a trip — "with God's will, I shall go tomorrow to Kovno."

After every meal, she would murmur, "God be praised, God be blessed for the food He provided for my children and myself; God be praised for the rain He gives us; God be praised for the heat, for the cold, for the fact that there is no sickness in the family," and so on the whole day.

To her children, she was a loving despot. For the slightest offense she would curse, threaten, and quite often emphasize her indignation with slaps in the face or punches on the body, sometimes using a stick or a whip to make it more effective; but soon after she would quietly ask God to forgive her for having been so brutal to her own flesh and blood.

"Poor innocent lambs," she would whisper, "it is my fault, not theirs, that we are so poor and they do not get enough to eat, and have to wear torn shoes and clothes. Must I give vent to my troubles and bitter heart by taking it out on them?" And so it would go on and on.

Her household duties, and giving birth to a child every second year (once it was twins, one of whom died), would have been enough work for any woman, but not for mother. Her sense of duty to her children, her devotion to her husband, impelled her to do something in order to help carry the burden of providing for the family. So she went into the bread-baking business. She would buy flour on credit, bake the bread in large round loaves and retail it by the pound. Starting with one baking a week, she increased to two and three a week. Little by little, she added groceries, such as sugar, salt, beans, peas, herring and other goods to her stock. At first she sold for cash only, but in a short time started to sell on credit, and her memory had to do the bookkeeping, which resulted in disputes galore.

Then mother bought a cow. It came about very simply. A peasant who had brought a cow to sell in town stopped at our house to buy some herring and at the same time get a drink of "schnapps," which had to be done secretly. The peasant mentioned that he had a cow to sell, and then and there the bargain was made. The Lithuanian got herring, tea, sugar, cereal and some money, and the cow remained with us. In a short time, she started to give milk, and six months later she presented us with a baby calf. This happened during the winter, and since it was dangerous for the mother cow to give birth in a cold barn, she was taken into the house, where she delivered her calf, and both animals were kept inside with us until it was safe to take them out into the barn.

The "midwife" to the delivery of the calf was an old Lithuanian woman by the name of Matulkas. She locked herself in the room with the cow, and let nobody in, and after staying there from about four o'clock in the afternoon until the next morning, she opened the door and called in mother, and later the children, to see what had happened. We saw a little creature lying on the floor, bedded with straw, and being licked by the mother cow. Matulkas occasionally strewed some salt on the little calf, to make the licking more tasty. The next day the little one was already standing on her feet, and we knew it was a calf, and the question of how the calf came into the room arose.

Mother told us that Matulkas, the Lithuanian woman, was responsible for our having a calf. I remember asking my mother why she had done this, and the answer was that she got paid for it.

"Well," I said, "why not pay her a little more, and have another one and another one?"

Of course, to this she gave me no answer, and I repeated the question several times. My brother, Harris, who was a few years older than I, and no doubt understood the phenomenon, finally interrupted.

"Do you know," he queried, "that the cat has little kittens?"

"Yes," I replied. "And the dog has little puppies, and the horse has little colts."

"Well," he said, "the cow has little calves. You don't expect that a cow should have kittens or dogs." Then he added, "Don't ask any more such foolish questions." And that silenced me and ended all queries as to how we had acquired the calf.

Soon the calf grew up to be a good looking cow, so that we were blessed with two cows. These animals served as a lesson in good conduct, for through them I had a taste of the danger of wrongdoing. It all came about because cows must be fed, and because all the land and fields surrounding the town were owned by a German nobleman, Herr Leopold von Ashfort.

The cows were fed a preparation of waste grain which mother purchased from various people, and lest they stray into Herr Ashfort's fields and cause trouble, they were kept in the barn day and night. But here the plot thickens.

A little boy, Berke, son of Zavel, was my "pal." His parents, following the example of my mother, also had bought a cow. One day Berke suggested to me that we take the cows out at night and let them feed in Herr Ashfort's hay field. Mother thought it was too dangerous, but agreed to let me take out one cow, so that if we got caught, we could say the cow had broken away from the barn and we had just found her.

Well, the plan worked. We took out the cows, one at a time, and let them eat to their heart's content. This went on for about ten nights, and we grew bolder and decided on another plan. Instead of taking the cows into the field, where we had to wait around for hours until they had had enough, why not bring the grass or hay from the field to the cows at home? In this way, we could be free to go to sleep, while the cows ate at leisure.

Mother strongly objected to this plan for the following reasons:

First, if the cows ate directly from the fields, the sin against God could not be great, for a cow could eat so much and no more in an hour or so, and for a little sin like that we could drop a coin into the charity box of Rabbi Meyer, the saint.

Secondly, as long as the cows committed the wrong, we were all safe; we had an alibi — the cows broke away from the barn; it was their fault and the children were simply looking for them. But if the children were, God forbid, caught with sacks of hay on their backs, they were thieves in the eyes of God and man.

Berke's father, a very short fellow and therefore called Zavel (the shrimp, or "little one"), was a philosopher of a sort, and argued very differently. He averred that Herr Ashfort was a German. Why did he not stay in Germany where he belonged? Why did he come to us poor Jews and gobble up all the land around us, cramping us in so little a space that we could not even take a walk in the fresh air? He owned all kinds of horses, cows, sheep and poultry, lived in a palace with God knew how many servants, and raced with his aides through the town like lightning, on his hunting horses, with a pack of wild hounds following, raising clouds of dust, while we all had to hide ourselves in the houses until he and his gang and the dust were gone.

By way of conclusion, he said, "I, poor man, have one little cow and cannot get a handful of grass to feed her. Has God created the fields and the grass only for Herr Ashfort? Have I not the right to get a little green grass for my cow?"

"Ah," sighed mother, "do not talk like this. Do not forget, Zavel, that we Jews are in goluth, in exile. This life which is short and hollow is for them, so that they have the best of it now, while the life in the world to come, which goes on eternally, will be ours; we will have the better life forever and ever."

My own opinion was that Zavel did not take much stock in his own words, nor in what my mother said. He simply felt there was no danger and that it would be safe to take a chance.

It was finally decided to try the plan just once and see what happened. That tryout, however, was our downfall.

Herr Ashfort's men had noticed that the hay field had been trampled on by cattle in several places, and notified the superintendent, who placed several men on watch. Little suspecting the terrifying experience that awaited us, Berke and I, each with a sack under our arms, went out on our mission around nine-thirty in the evening, with malice aforethought, callously determined to rob Herr Leopold von Ashfort of some grass.

We had filled our sacks, lifted them on our shoulders and had started homeward, when Berke suddenly whispered to me, "Drop the bag and run. We are discovered."

I did so, but alas, it was too late. A long whip was coiled around my body and pulled me down to the ground. I was faced by two big Goyim (gentiles), fortunately not Germans but Lithuanians, whom we knew to be not so strict as the Germans.

They stood there, laughing at me, saying, "So little and already a thief."

At the same time, two other "Litwakes" brought in Berke. Understanding their language, and knowing that the "Litwakes" were easy-going people, I pleaded with them to let us go. I offered them my cap as a bribe, but they said they could not release us. One of them went to the palace to notify their superior of the catch they had made.

My partner in crime tried a foolish trick. He stood for a while, gazing unsteadily at the sky. Suddenly he cried out, "My heart, oh, I am dying!" and fell to the ground, lying as quietly as a dead mouse. I talked to him, shook him, pinched him, but there was no response. I really thought he was dead, and started to cry. However, one of the men lit a match and slowly and carefully applied it to the boy's bare foot, when the not-so-clever Berke jumped up like a two-year-old.

The messenger presently returned with a German, who held a short horsewhip in his hands. He stood in the moonlight for a moment, staring at us, and then exclaimed, "Starting in business very young, eh? — Well, take them along!" We were taken to the palace grounds and locked up in a dark cellar.

The next morning we were taken out on the grounds and confronted by Herr Ashfort himself. He looked at Berke and asked in mocking Yiddish:

"Who sent you to steal my property?"

"Nobody," Berke answered.

He then asked me the same question, and I answered, "The hungry cows sent me."

I do not know how he liked my answer, but he retorted, "If you keep on like this, you will land in Siberia."

He finally told his men to take us home, and we were led back like prisoners. The whole town followed us, and we heard one continual shouting: "Thieves — hay thieves — burned feet — thieves" and so on.

My poor mother cried that she would die for shame.

"Woe, woe is me!" she lamented. "How will I show my face to the world? My son, the son of Yankel Horwich, a thief, caught red-handed in the act! How will I live it through?" Worst of all, father was not at home.

I hid myself in a corner, feeling the guilt was all mine and that I had brought on all this trouble. Of course, mother tried to place all the blame on Zavel and his son, but I felt I had had no business to take their advice. I felt particularly guilty, because poor mother had to take care of a grocery, a bakery and two cows, make cream, cheese and butter and sell them, and now had to have such a disgrace while father was away.

It seems, however, that father's absence was to our advantage, for Herr Ashfort was after all a nobleman and a gentleman. When he was told by some friends of ours that if my father had been home, he would not have allowed such a thing, and that when he returned he would surely straighten everything out, Herr Ashfort agreed to wait, although with the understanding that someone would have to be punished as an example to others — otherwise he would be having trouble all the time.

Father came home about five weeks later, when the terrible scandal was somewhat forgotten. When he heard of it, he sat down with me, and listened to the whole story from beginning to end.

Mother was standing by, and she cried: "To all my worries and troubles, God had to send me this, the greatest trouble of all"— and she was sure, as sure as she was that this day, Friday, was just one day before the Sabbath, that if her father, David, the great pious man who was now in Heaven, had not interceded with God in her behalf, her children would by this time have been without a mother.

Father looked at her and said: "No doubt you are right, but it would have been better if our son had not gone to steal the grass, and had saved us and your father in Heaven and the Almighty, all this trouble."

It was my good fortune, he went on to say, that I had been caught at my first offense, for according to our sages of old, one transgression brings on another, and the end of a criminal is the noose around his neck. He said the sin of stealing from a Christian, in the opinion of the Rabbis, was even greater than stealing from a Jew, because in stealing from a Jew, only one man was hurt, and God could forgive such a sin; whereas, stealing from a Christian was an unforgivable sin, because when a Jew commits an offense against a non-Jew, all Jews are blamed for it, and the reputation of all Jews is besmirched, and God could not easily forgive such a crime without punishment.

Father was a man of few words, but when he did say something, it always hit the mark. Every sentence was concise and to the point, and was like a needle stuck into my flesh, ten times worse than the beatings from mother. The tears were running down my face, but I kept quiet. Mother stood there, sighing and somewhat betraying her guilty conscience, but put all the blame on Zavel and his son, "the scoundrel."

The worst was now over. A few days later my father and Zavel went to see Herr Ashfort, and settled the matter with a fine of five roubles per cow, my father paying his ten roubles then and there. Zavel promised to pay his fine in a few days, but never did. There were rumors that Herr Ashfort turned over the ten roubles he received to Rabbi Avremil to be used for charity, with the understanding that it remain a secret forever.

Several months later, fate decreed that I should have some more trouble. It was not as bad as the incident of the cows, but I was again in the limelight before my fellow townsmen.

Tevie, the tailor, had a boy of about my age by the name of Ruvke, whom I used to go with once in a while. He was not very pleasant to get along with, and at the slightest misunderstanding between us he would call me "overfed Keize," referring to my mother, who was a very heavy woman. It was the habit among the children to insult each other by some special characteristic of the parents. Thus, if a boy's father was tall and thin, his playmates would call the boy in question "the long, skinny one."

One time when this tailor's boy called me "overfed Keize," I felt insulted and slapped his face. He jumped away a few feet, picked up a small stone and threw it at me, but missed me, and I in turn picked up a little stone and threw it at him. It struck him on the nose and caused it to bleed. I was not, however, aware that his nose was bleeding. All I knew was that he ran home after I struck him, crying "Mother!"

About an hour later, when I had returned to my house, Basse, Ruvke's mother, came in leading the boy by the hand. There was blood on his face. As I learned afterward, she had purposely not washed his face, leaving the blood there to show what a "killer" I was.

My mother asked her what was the matter. "I see your boy has blood on his face."

Ruvke's mother replied with this little speech: "Your son will certainly grow up to be a big man. He started in as a thief, and now he is trying to end up as a murderer." Then she started to cry and went on:

"Most of the nine months that I had him under my heart I was sick, and then all the pain and trouble and expense during his birth. For the last six years I am working and slaving for my son, and now that he is growing up, strong and healthy, and with God's help will soon start to go to cheder (Hebrew school), and become a grown-up, reputable, God-fearing Jewish man, your son, the thief, wants to rob me of him by killing him!"

In those days, in a small town, to see blood on anyone filled people with terror, and my mother stood trembling.

"First of all," she said, "let us see where he is hurt." She brought a towel and water, and washed off his face, and was very happy to see that there were no marks of any kind, and that the injury was very slight.

It so happened that this time my father was at home. He wanted to know what had happened, and I told him; but I did not dare to repeat the actual words Ruvke had used, as I considered them too great an insult to be spoken before others. In his mild and quiet manner, he reproved me.

"Even if you are right, you are guilty," he said. "You should avoid such incidents. If he threw a stone at you, you should have gone to his father and complained, and not thrown stones at him, since he is smaller than you are. Therefore," he continued, "I am going away tomorrow and the present of five kopeks (two cents) which you would otherwise get from me, I will give to that boy." He did this, and everybody concerned seemed satisfied.

I felt, however, that an injustice had been done me, and it worried me a great deal. I was especially indignant when I met Ruvke's father on the street and he made fun of me, saying, "The next time you touch my boy, it will go much harder with you."

One evening, about two months later, I and three other boys passed by the house of the tailor, and we noticed he was sitting behind a closed window, mending by the light of a candle. I turned to my friends and asked: "What can we do to get even with that fellow?"

One of the boys, by the name of Yossel Bregstone, said: "Let us take that little fellow (a boy of about five years who was with us), open the back of his trousers, and lift him up with his bare back to the window."

Accordingly, two of the boys, one on each side, lifted up the lad, as I stood aside, watching. I saw Tevie raise his head, stare for a second, and start to tremble. He then called loudly to his wife. She came, lifted her hands in amazement, and shouted:

"Woe is me! This must be a sinful soul whose face was changed into this, and cannot rest in his grave. I will run to the Rabbi!" We all ran away as she approached the door.

The next morning the whole town knew of the incident. The Rabbi had explained to Tevie's wife that evil spirits do not appear in the form of a child's back or any back.

"No doubt," he said, "it was a trick by some youngsters."

Basse caught on. "Ah," she exclaimed, "dear Rabbi, you are right. It is Yankel's son."

Although the participants had all been sworn to secrecy, it was somehow discovered how the trick was accomplished, and that I was responsible. But because this prank made everybody laugh, I escaped punishment.

About this time, a scandal occurred which aroused the entire town, and which made a deep impression on my youthful mind. I relate the story as illustrative of the strict moral code which prevailed in Jewish communities like ours and the severity with which infractions were punished.

It happened that a married man, fairly well known in the town, was on his way to Kovno early one morning, when he met a woman whom he knew, a widow, also from Poniemon, going in the same direction. They talked matters over, and agreed that according to Jewish law, should they commit an immoral act, the sin would be of little consequence, since she had no husband and the man's wife had been an invalid for many years. To their misfortune, however, Herr Ashfort happened to be out fox hunting that morning, and instead of catching foxes, came upon the guilty couple, and they were publicly exposed.

Such a crime was unheard of in the history of Poniemon, and for months afterward nothing else was discussed. The men of the town were inclined to be lenient, some of them even joking about the incident, but the women were up in arms. Basse, the wife of Tevie, the tailor, insisted and was ready to take an oath that "as true as there is a God in heaven, so true is it that since the world began, such an outrage has not been committed among Jews."

Marie, the wife of Zavel, the "short one," lamented the fact that Herr Ashfort had been the one to catch them. It would not have been half as bad, she maintained, if a Jew had found them. Now the "goyim" would have something on us.

Freide, the wife of Kadish, suggested that a special prayer be offered to God, asking Him not to revenge Himself on "our little children" because of the sin committed by these two people. She maintained that God understands the weaknesses of human beings, some of whom do not have sufficient will power to resist the Evil Angel but give way to temptation.

Grandma Sarah, the midwife, agreed with Freide, and expressed great concern for the safety of the little children, who, according to her information, are liable to pay the penalty for the sins of the grown-ups. She amended Freide's suggestion, not only to offer special prayers, but to pay a special visit to the cemetery and make a strong appeal (and not be stingy with tears) to our ancestors (peace be with them), to intercede on behalf of the innocent people of the town, especially the little ones, and ask for mercy and forgiveness from God Almighty.

My mother felt that it was a case for the Rabbi and not the women to decide.

"What do we inexperienced, ignorant women know about such important matters?" she argued. "It is up to the Rabbi, who understands the ways of the Ruler of the Universe better than all the women of Poniemon and Kovno put together. So let him be the judge, and hear what he has to say."

Two days later the culprits stood before the Rabbi with downcast eyes, distressed and dishonored. The Rabbi questioned them, but the only reply he received was tearful sighing.

"Well," said he finally, "the law states that silence means admission of guilt; and even without your confession, your guilt has been established. You have committed a heinous sin against God and man. Therefore I say, for your own good and for the protection of the purity and sanctity of Jewish family life, it is my duty, in the name of God and His holy law, to punish you as an example and warning to others.

"This is my judgment," he said to the man. "The next Sabbath and the following three Sabbaths, as well as on the coming Holidays, you are to be at the Synagogue before the worshippers assemble for morning service. You will lie face downward on the threshold of the Synagogue, so that everyone who comes in must step over you. In addition, you will receive forty lashes with a leather strap, administered by the Shamesh (the beadle). You should also double or triple the coins you drop in the charity box every Friday afternoon.

"As for you," the Rabbi said to the woman, "I believe it is best for you, as well as for the community, that you move to another town where you are not known, and if possible, that you change your name there. As long as you remain here," the Rabbi continued, "you are likely to be molested, insulted and suffer all kinds of mental torture, and you will be looked upon as a thorn and an outcast in the eyes of the community. I will raise the necessary funds to enable you and your two children to move to another place, where your past will not molest you."

The judgment of the Rabbi was carried out in all its details. I myself was one of those who stepped over the guilty man, as he lay across the threshold of the Synagogue, and sympathized deeply with the humiliation and mental anguish he must have suffered.

However, no one ever questioned the wisdom of the Rabbi, which was again established in another case brought before him, after other attempts at settlement had failed. This episode, I remember, created quite a stir in our town and even outside it.

Two Jews quarreled over a piece of property, and instead of going immediately to the Rabbi to settle the dispute, applied to the mayor. In important cases, especially those of a criminal nature, the mayor would receive the complaints and report his opinion to his superiors.

Both sides were convinced they were in the right, of course, and each did his best to convince the mayor of this, although, God forbid, they should try to influence him to render an unjust verdict! One man's method of proving his righteousness was to send the mayor a few pounds of sausage, purchased in Kovno, and which had been imported from the great city of Warsaw. The other party, however, was not asleep on the job. He discovered that the mayor was a great lover of the best brand of tea, known as Poppoff's Tea, which was imported from St. Petersburg, and sent him a package. The first man, hearing about it, added two pounds of sugar to the sausage; and his opponent thereupon sent the mayor several pounds of cheese.

A clever statesman, the mayor took the case under advisement, to give both parties sufficient opportunity to prove their admiration for him, and they kindly obliged him. They were kept busy making the journey from Poniemon to Kovno almost twice a week to buy gifts for the mayor, in the hope of securing a favorable decision. They finally tired of these travels, and each, independent of the other, decided to discontinue sending gifts, but make periodic cash payments instead. The oftener both sides sent him money, the more time it took the mayor to decide the case. Finally the litigants began to count the cost, which grew from week to week, and became somewhat discouraged. They had to make presents in kind or in cash not only to the mayor, but to his assistant as well, since the latter would tip off each party as to the gift sent to his lordship by the other, and expected remuneration for this service.

After both parties had invested in the lord mayor's impartiality and judicial honesty a small fortune, with no termination of the matter in sight, they decided to withdraw the case from His Honor, and take it to the Rabbi.

The happy result was that the dispute was settled by a compromise within a few days, and everybody was satisfied. It was then, even more than before, that the Jews of our town appreciated the honesty, efficiency and fairness of our Rabbi.

As I recall, father used to be away from home six or seven months out of the year, and it was, therefore, a sort of holiday when he would come home after these long absences. Weeks before he arrived, everybody was happy in the expectation of his return. "Father comes! Father comes!" was heard everywhere. Mother's face beamed with happiness, the children were given better and more food. Beggars were given larger slices of bread, and mother pressed a few coins into the hands of some of them. The charity box, nailed to the wall, in memory of Rabbi Meyer, the Miracle Man, received greater gifts than ever. The name of God was mentioned oftener even than before.

When father left, however, gloom returned. The agony of going to "cheder," which had been somewhat mitigated by the excitement of his presence, loomed up again. The uninviting little room which constituted the Hebrew school, the harsh face of the teacher, with unkempt beard, a whip in his hand, confronting us for twelve hours a day (with only one hour off for lunch), filled us with repugnance and made the experience a miserable one; yet we all had to put up with it and like it.

* * *

My Hebrew and Biblical education began at the age of five and continued until I was thirteen, when I celebrated my Bar Mitzvah. Those eight years of childhood, which should be the happiest, most carefree time of a person's life, were marred for generations of Jewish boys by the grueling discipline and wretched teaching methods of the "cheders" and religious schools.

The very first day that I was taken to "cheder" by my mother, I received a lecture from the teacher. A man in the sixties, he was of small stature, bent over, and looked centuries old.

"If you will be good," he admonished me, "and concentrate all your being on study, and will learn the holy writings of the Bible and the Torah that was given to us by God through Moses, then you can expect a reward in this world and in the world to come.

"But," he threatened, "if you will be bad — mean and lazy, and will not put your mind to your studies, and think instead about playing, then God will punish you wherever you will be, here in this world and in the next world."

My mother stood by, nodding her head in corroboration. Overcome by the emotional fervor his speech aroused, she said to me, with tears in her eyes, "Did you hear what the Rabbi said? Remember, now!"

"Do you promise to follow all instructions?" the Rabbi then asked me.

"Yes, I promise," I said, rather bewildered by all this ceremony.

"Then," said the Rabbi, "we will find out right now the kind of boy you are."

He brought out a sheet of paper on which was printed the Hebrew alphabet in large letters, and waved to my mother and me to sit down. Pointing out the letters, he said: "This is Aleph, this is Baiz," and so forth, naming the first five. He went over it three times, and then asked me whether I knew it. I told him I did. Unknown to my mother or father, I had learned the "Aleph Baiz" by listening to the other children.

"If you show me that you remember what I have taught you," he said, "then the Angel will drop down some money for you. But if you don't know it, and the Angel does not drop down any money, it will show that you did not pay strict attention to what I have been saying."

Pointing to a strap hanging on the wall, he added: "Instead of money, you will get that, if you do not learn properly."

While I pretended to take all this seriously, I was not fooled by his story about the money from the Angel. A few days before, I had seen a mother stand behind her boy and drop a coin onto his book at a signal from the Rabbi, so that he would think it came from heaven.

When the Rabbi asked me to name the letters, I did so in proper order. He then selected the letters at random, to see if he could confuse me, but in each case I answered correctly.

"Well," said the old man, "you are doing very nicely. The Angel ought to give you double what the other children have received."

At that moment, two kopeks dropped right in front of me. My mother was beaming with pride. She kissed me, and cried for joy.

"You will see," she said to the Rabbi, "my children are not like others. You won't have much trouble with them. But if they don't behave, don't spare the strap."

After this first private lesson, I joined the beginning class, consisting of twelve students. For about six months, I studied with this group, and was then transferred to a more advanced class, under another instructor, to begin the study of the Bible.

I had thought the reason the first Rabbi looked so miserable and acted so mean was because he was sickly and undernourished, but found his attitude and demeanor in the classroom to be quite typical.

Slaps on the face were routine. They just went with the lessons. Scoldings were frequent, and the most abusive language was hurled at us. For making noise or talking during the lesson, the strap was freely used. Our only consolation in the beginners' class was that our Rabbi did not have enough strength to inflict great pain.

I was overjoyed to leave my first teacher, but the second did not prove much better. However, he was a younger man and more pleasant in appearance and demeanor. Occasionally one caught a smile on his face, and once in a while he would make funny remarks, which would make us laugh. But he was very strict in his instruction, and insisted that we understand exactly whatever he said. He would try to catch us off guard with unexpected questions, and would not leave off his explanations until there was not the least doubt that he was thoroughly understood in every minute detail.

After about five years with this class, I was again transferred, to begin the study of the Talmud under a third Rabbi. This occupied the remainder of my schooling.

Had the teachers of those days had any sympathetic understanding of children, those early years might not have been so dreary. They made no effort to present their instruction in an interesting manner — and instead of arousing a desire for knowledge in us, they filled us with fear and dislike.

During our eight years of schooling, all three of our Rabbis constantly hammered at us that we must be always aware of our Jewishness; that God watched the Jews carefully, and any who did anything wrong would be severely punished, if not in this world, then surely in the world to come.

Of course, one cannot place all the blame upon these teachers. They followed the traditional, accepted method of instruction — they knew no other methods. Because of the general poverty, they were, as a rule, underpaid and overworked. It was usually with great difficulty that they extracted their fees from the parents of their pupils, and these were small enough. It is natural that their worry over their daily bread, and the strain of teaching unruly and unwilling boys for long hours, should have caused them to vent their irritation upon their young charges.

The lot of the Jewish boys in those days was not a particularly enviable one. For the most part, the children were reared in poor, overcrowded homes, by nervous, overworked mothers. The precious daylight hours were spent in the dreary "cheders" and Hebrew schools. Besides, attendance at the synagogue was required for additional hours, morning and evening, and on the holidays. Household chores occupied what time remained. It is little wonder that such a regime left its mark upon thousands.

Yet, surprisingly, some of our greatest men were the products of that system.

* * *

Mother, who never felt right unless she had something to worry about, now started to be anxious about her next child, which was due in several months.

"Will it be a girl, or, God forbid, a soldier again?"— meaning a boy.

She went to see the Rabbi and spent as much money as she could afford for charity and prayer; and consulted Frau Maurishheit, who lived near us and was a friend of the family.

Frau Maurishheit was a typical German woman, simple, unassuming, honest, and a devout Protestant. She was always working. Her reputation among the Jewish women was very fine. They liked her and considered her to be a nice "Deutsche," who might be a little foolish but nevertheless knew a great deal. She could read and write German. Once in a while she would receive a German newspaper from her friends in Berlin, and would tell her Jewish friends what was happening in the world outside. The war between France and Germany was being waged at that time, and she was very eager to talk about it and have everybody know that Germany was winning battle after battle.

Her husband, Herr Maurishheit, was a blunt, bulky German, who worked in a foundry near Kovno and used to come home on Saturday afternoon, returning to work Monday morning. Occasionally he would come in with too much "schnapps" in his system and raise a rumpus with his frau. When that happened, she would take refuge in our house until he sobered up.

Once he overreached himself with his beating, and she came to our house with a bruised and swollen face. My mother, wishing to help her, took her to the Rabbi for advice. Frau Maurishheit had been unwilling to go at first, but mother convinced her that he could help her solve her problem. The authority of the Rabbi was accepted by everybody, Jew and non-Jew.

After hearing her story, the Rabbi instructed the woman to tell her husband that he would have to answer to him for his misbehavior, and sure enough, the next day the husband appeared before the Rabbi. The excuse he gave for his mistreatment of his wife was, first, that supper was not ready on time, and, secondly, that the soup did not have enough salt in it.

The Rabbi spoke to him kindly and sympathetically, saying: "Your wife works very hard doing washing for some wealthy people, besides taking care of the house and children. Everybody knows you are a nice man; I cannot imagine you would be so brutal to your wife for such trifles. If the soup did not have enough salt, you could have put some in it, and if the supper was not ready on time, there would have been no harm in waiting a little while. I think, Herr Maurishheit," he added smilingly, "you were not in your right senses when you beat up your wife so shamefully. It seems to me you drank a little too much and did not know what you were doing. Am I right?"

The big, husky German sat there looking very guilty. He nodded his head and said:

"Ya, I did have too many drinks, and I did use my hands too freely; but Herr Rabbiner, women are like children — you have to give them a thrashing once in a while; otherwise they get spoiled."

The Rabbi fingered and smoothed his beard, and for a moment it appeared as if Maurishheit had presented a good argument; but the former soon replied:

"Ya, Ya, Herr Maurishheit, you are right. There are some women who have to be disciplined; and for that matter, there are some men, even more than women, who should be corrected. But your wife is not in that class. I am told that she is a nice, modest, obliging, obedient and hard-working woman, a good wife and good mother. Is that not true?" he asked, turning to my mother, who was present at the proceedings.

"Is it true?" my mother repeated. "Why!" she stated excitedly, "may God punish me, my husband and my children, if it is not true. May God give me strength, health and long enough life to see my sons marry such fine women — of course, Jewish women," she interrupted herself, "as Frau Maurishheit. I know better than anyone how hard she works. I tell you she works too hard for her strength, and some day (pointing her finger accusingly at Maurishheit), you will find your wife dead from overwork. God knows how hard I work, too. I also slave from early morning until late at night. Oh, what we women have to suffer." And she started to cry, wiping the tears with her apron.

The Rabbi's wife helped her along. "Such a big strong man like you," she broke in, "beating your wife! Pfui! Shame on you! Men like you do not deserve to have wives. You ought to get down on your knees and beg forgiveness from your wife, and give her extra money besides."

Herr Maurishheit was completely routed. It was fortunate for him that his wife was not present at this hearing, or his humiliation would undoubtedly have been much worse.

The verdict of the Rabbi was that Maurishheit should not have more than two moderate drinks in any half day, for the next six months, and never beat his wife. He accepted his punishment gracefully, and promised, on his word of honor, to abide by it. However, it was learned later that he would add sour wine to the whiskey apportioned him, as he did not consider wine a regular drink.

Frau Maurishheit knew a lot about children's ailments, and would advise the mothers what to do for rheumatism, dyspepsia, colds, coughs, etc. My mother considered her also an expert in interpreting dreams. To mother, dreams were a part of her life. She was always watching for a good dream, and when she had one, would call Frau Maurishheit to interpret it for her. First, however, she would talk to the woman about household matters — about the prunes she had cooked for the Sabbath, or the fresh butter cakes she had just taken out of the oven. Incidentally, she would give Frau Maurishheit some to taste, and to take home for her children. No doubt, she unconsciously gave this to her as a sort of bribe, to insure a pleasant interpretation of her dreams.

I remember distinctly how nervous and anxious mother was on one such occasion. She had beheld in one of her dreams a fine little bird with brightly-colored feathers flying into the house through an open window and settling on top of the dresser. She related this to Frau Maurishheit with such fervor and enthusiasm that she had to be admonished several times to calm down and speak more coherently.

The reason for her excitement was that she hoped Frau Maurishheit would tell her that her expected child would be a girl. But, alas, that was not the interpretation she received. The woman, after much questioning as to the details of the dream, merely informed her that it meant something good was going to happen, but that she could not say how soon, or what it would be. This was a great disappointment to my mother — and realizing her worst fears, a few months later we had another little boy in the family.

I often heard mother bemoaning her fate to Freide, the wife of Kadish, who was her dearest friend and confidante.

"God is just and His ways are just, and I hope I will not commit a sin with my words," she would say, "but I would like to know why, oh why, dear God, must I have all boys, who may have to be soldiers in the Czar's army, while Hende, my sister-in-law, has all girls. Why should I not have a few girls and she a few boys?"

Hende was the wife of her brother, Chaym Leiser, and they lived on the opposite side of our house. How Aunt Hende had ever had children, and healthy, good-looking children at that, was quite a puzzle to everyone. A thin, sickly little woman, asthmatic, continually coughing and complaining about her heart, she nevertheless was full of energy and worked very hard rearing her five girls, who were husky, strong and good-looking.

Freide, a sensible housewife, and the mother of several sons and daughters, was always very sympathetic.

"You should not complain, Keize," she would tell mother. "God is just and His judgment is just, precisely as you say. If He gives you boys, He knows the reason why, and if He gives Hende girls, He also knows what He is doing. Anyway, it is better to have sons than daughters, for sons are only troublesome until they grow up. After that, they can be sent out into the world, to deep Russia, to England or to America. My son, Shleime, for example, is waiting for a ticket from a relative of mine in New York, and he will leave as soon as the ticket arrives." Shleime, as it happens, was an ordinary, small town "kabibble," who spent his time in praying, sleeping, yawning and eating, when there was something to eat.

"In a year from now," Freide asserted, "he will probably send us money, and will soon take over his brothers, and then we can, with God's help, live without worry."

"But girls," she continued, "ah, I should not sin with my words — they are a burden on your head when they are small and a yoke around your neck when they are grown up. Take the case of my Hannah. In a year from now, we will have to look around for a young man for her. And then what will happen? We haven't a rouble for dowry, for wedding expenses, or for an outfit, and unless a miracle happens, or we get money from America, we will be in a nice fix.

"But you, Keize, do not have such troubles, at least for the present, so do not complain and ask questions of God, why so and not the other way. Rest assured, He knows how to govern the world."

The building in which my Aunt Hende lived, with her husband and their daughters (who were named Katie, Mollie, Pearl, Hannah, Katie Chaye and Tillie), was a dilapidated old frame shack, containing one big room and two small ones, which served as shelter for them all. In the summer months, it was not so bad. Uncle would sleep in the attic, and some of the girls in the hallway between our house and theirs. True, they were troubled by flies and mosquitoes, but they had moonlight and room enough to enjoy a night's sleep.

In the winter months, however, it was harder. As a rule, we experienced four or five months of steady, severe cold, and often snowstorms, and then the windows of their rooms would be so thickly frozen over that hardly any daylight penetrated.

One bitterly cold afternoon, my aunt was sitting near her stove, reading a prayer book by the light of a flat piece of wood stuck between two bricks of the oven, when a Cossack came in with a heavy horsewhip in his hands. He demanded "podatek," or taxes. We all knew what that word meant. Although my aunt could not speak Russian, she knew what he wanted, and tried to explain to him by means of gestures that she did not have any money. The angry Cossack ran through the rooms, picked up two pillows, and tore off an old shawl Aunt Hende had on her shoulders. He gave her several lashes with his whip, and disappeared. The poor woman fell off her chair, and hearing the disturbance I ran in and tried to help her get up, in the meantime shouting for help. She was sick in bed for two weeks afterward.

With all her hardships, that frail little woman, sick most of the time, and poor as poor can be, lived long enough to see most of her daughters marry and have children. She lived to the age of seventy.

* * *

What became of Hannah, the daughter of Freide, I do not know, but I do remember how her son, Shleime, fared, because I experienced some unpleasantness through him, though not as bad as in the incident with Berke, the son of Zavel.

It was now about eight weeks since Shleime had left for America, and during this time the question of whether God was governing His world justly had been definitely decided by his mother and mine in favor of God. Finally the long-awaited letter from Shleime was received, mailed from New York.

The excited Freide, letter in hand, and followed by a host of women of all classes — poor, middle poor, hungry poor, and so forth — came running into our house just as I was returning from "cheder." I was called upon to read the letter, and my mother made me get up on a chair, where I read aloud and slowly, so that everybody could understand. The missive was written in Yiddish, and was six pages long, and I read on and on, to the great satisfaction of the full house.

I took the liberty of making corrections in the letter as I went along, adding some words here and there and omitting others, to make it sound perfect. Now and then I looked at the crowd, and noticed Freide shedding tears of joy, and saw my mother's round, smooth, fleshy, good-looking face, her blue eyes beaming with delight because of my perfect reading; although at another point

I found her looking displeased — and later found this was due to the fact that she was jealous of Freide, because her Shleime, a silly fellow who did not amount to very much, could write such a fine letter.

The communication contained about six greetings — two for the Rabbi and his wife, and about four or five for relatives; but I wasn't stingy, and included regards for almost everybody present.

When I finished, the listeners broke into expressions of praise and blessing for the writer and the reader, and especially for their mothers.

"Blessed are the women who bear such children!" one woman exclaimed. "Oh, God, think of my sons also, and let them be like these boys when they grow up."

My mother, however, did not like to have her boys praised in their presence, lest they become spoiled.

"Ah," she said, "do we have to thank them for it? For whom do we slave, for whom do we worry, for whom do we break our hearts, to feed and clothe? Do I not pay enough tuition for his education?" (My Hebrew teacher received ten roubles a year from our family for the instruction of two boys.) "Indeed," she added, "they should know a great deal more than they do."

All in all, everybody including myself was very pleased with the reading of the letter; but unfortunately the matter did not end there.

Mr. Kadish, Freide's husband, was not at home at the time, and when he came home for the Sabbath, he learned with great delight of the letter from Shleime. On Saturday evening, he took the letter to the Rabbi, apologizing on behalf of his wife for taking the letter first to our house instead of bringing this important document directly to the Rabbi's house.

"You know how women are," he said. "When they get excited, they do not know what they are doing."

He then asked the Rabbi to read the letter to him, which the Rabbi did, and here is where I got into trouble again.

I was charged with falsifying and misrepresentation, for adding sentences that were not there, for leaving out words that were in the letter, and especially for reading regards to people not mentioned. Hershel, the cobbler, Tevie, the, tailor, and others whose names I had falsely included in the list of greetings were furious.

"Because we are poor," they raged, "an impudent little loafer takes the liberty of insulting us and having fun at our expense. We will go to the Rabbi and demand justice!"

My mother was dragged into the scandal, for they claimed that a little brat like myself was not really capable of inventing such tricks.

"His mother, the fat, overfed Keize, no doubt was the brains behind this outrage," they argued.

The Rabbi finally settled the dispute in the following manner — my mother had to give her word of honor that she had had no hand in it, and knew nothing about it; and as for myself, I had to assure the Rabbi that my intentions were good, and that I had meant no offense toward anyone. On the contrary, I explained to him, I wished to avoid Freide embarrassment and save Shleime from incurring enemies at home, for I felt that he should have mentioned the names of these people, and since he failed to do so, and they were all present, I did it for him.

To placate the complainants, the Rabbi suggested that at my Bar Mitzvah, or confirmation, during the coming year, at the reading of the Torah in the Synagogue, I should have all their names mentioned, and my mother was instructed that she should donate five gulden (about fifty-five cents) to charity in their honor.

In the end, the matter turned out in my favor, for my mother, who had been jealous of Freide because her son could write so well, was now satisfied.

"I was wondering," she told the women of her acquaintance, "how the silly Shleime could write so well, and now you see I was right. And what do you think of my boy?" she boasted. "Isn't he clever? I think he has more sense than some grown-ups."

Thus for a time I was looked upon almost as a hero, and the blot on my reputation due to the incident of Herr Ashfort's hay field and the "hungry cows" was forgotten.

* * *

On the occasion of my Bar Mitzvoh, at the age of thirteen, it might be said that contrary to the usual procedure, I was not confirmed but did the confirming myself. My father was away from home measuring lumber, earning eight rubles, or $4.00, per week. My mother had just given birth to her sixth son, and was still confined to her bed. She had made herself much worse than she was with crying and bewailing her fate because the child was not a girl. The only consolation she had was that her sister-in-law, Hende, was similarly distressed, though for the opposite reason, her five children being all girls.

So I stood alone on the pulpit in the synagogue on that important day. As was the custom, I read a chapter in the Bible, quoted several prayers by heart, and then delivered a talk. My teacher had given me the subject and instructed me to work it out myself. As I remember it, my speech dealt with the two codes of the Jewish religion — the code between man and God, and the code between man and man. I explained that the code between man and God required that God be praised for everything He had done. He was to be praised for creating Heaven and Earth, the sun, the moon and the stars, the water and the land. He was also to be praised, I said, for creating me — although even at that time, I had a slight idea that my parents had something to do with it. God was likewise to be praised for making me a male and not a female. I added that the duties of man to God were also, among other things, to attend synagogue three times a day, to obey the dietary laws, to pray and have faith in Him and have Him in one's heart and mind day and night. The duties of man to man were to be charitable, to help the poor and the sick, especially the widow and the orphan — not to quarrel or fight, not to bear any grudge, and not to take revenge against anyone, or take advantage of anyone. It was not meant, I explained, that a Jew should live by either one code or the other — but by both. These two codes must be practiced side by side by every Jew.

So far, so good. But then I added some criticism on my own initiative. I told the congregation that the trouble was that people who could afford to do charitable deeds and help the poor, thought they could partly get out of it by praying a little more than usual and praising God more loudly — that being much easier and cheaper. As an example, I pointed to the corner of the roof of the synagogue, which had been torn away by a strong wind a few months before, and had been left in that state because the people who could afford to do so would not give their proportionate share to have it repaired. I added that we had many hungry people who went begging every day, and that they got more from the poor than from the well-to-do. I continued in that strain for a while and closed with the comment that the Rabbi of the congregation ought to admonish such people to do their duty. I then donated the five gulden, in accordance with the previous judgment of the Rabbi.

When I finished, my teacher came up to the platform and told the congregation that the last remarks I had made were an impudence on my part; that had he known beforehand that I would be so impertinent and talk about things that were no concern of mine, he would have warned me against doing so. He advised me to take care of my big mouth, as I was likely to get into trouble.

"Now you are a man," he then proclaimed, "responsible for everything you do and say, and I advise you to watch your step and think twice before you open your mouth."

I left the synagogue as an independent individual. Eight months later I left my home as an independent individual, and from then on was always on my own.

* * *

It now became necessary to consider my future. There were several courses to be pursued by the young men of Poniemon. One was to leave the country, and seek fame and fortune in other lands, especially America. Another course was to go to some large town which contained a Hebrew college or seminary, so that a young man so inclined could study for the rabbinate, during which time he would be supported by his parents or by the community, or both. Some young men preferred to take the line of least resistance and remained at home until a Shadchen (marriage broker) arranged to marry them off to girls whose parents could afford to take care of them.

One of the greatest problems in the life of a young man in Russia, next to that of earning a living, was the question of military service. It was not the principle of soldiering in itself that was so objectionable — it was the attitude of the officers, their arrogance, their mean and foolish ways of displaying their superiority, and their strict discipline, especially manifested toward the Jewish soldiers, that the young men hated. Parents considered it a calamity when a son was taken into the army, partly because of the mistreatment, but especially because of his inability to live according to the Jewish religion while in service. Thus, the first concern of a young man who intended to remain in Russia was to escape military service. To gain this freedom, one had to deal with the bureaucrats, who as a rule were spendthrifts and bribe-takers. The more money they had, the more they spent, and the more they spent, the more they needed; so there was no end of bribe-taking.

But even after securing a certificate from these officials freeing one from military duty, one was not always assured of a peaceful life. If the holder of such a certificate remained in the district where he was known, he was always subject to blackmailers, who were ready to denounce him unless they, too, were bribed. As a result, therefore, only well-to-do fathers, or those who had good standing in the community or were particularly known for their learning stood a good chance of freeing their sons from military service.

My oldest brother, Aron, was just reaching the age when something had to be done about this problem. He was good-looking and very sensible, and though a bit selfish perhaps, was candidly so. He craved all the good things of life, and especially loved showy clothes. He had no desire for study and no particular initiative, and relied upon father for almost everything.

Trying to make a business man out of him, father had taken him along on his travels, to teach him the timber business, and incidentally to find for him a girl with a rich father. Within less than a year, the search was ended, and he was married into a family of more than average standing. His father-in-law took him into his house, freed him from military service, and undertook to support him.

However, it seems the support he received from his in-laws was not altogether satisfactory, as was evidenced by his appearance when he visited us several months after the marriage. He looked so pale and haggard that mother nearly fainted when she saw him. She decided he must be kept in a room all by himself and away from outsiders until she could "feed him up" and get him to look like himself again. She feared that people with malice in their hearts, even friends, would find satisfaction in seeing him in that state, and would say:

"Well, the oldest son of Keize got into a wonderful family; the way he looks, they must feed him like a criminal on bread and water." So she would not let anyone outside the family see him until he had gained weight, "even more than he weighed at his wedding," so that people might believe that the match was a great success.

The day of his homecoming was not a very happy one for me. I had been in the Synagogue for the morning prayers, and came home about an hour after his arrival. When I saw how he looked, I was undiplomatic enough to make a "wisecrack" about it. In the presence of Pearl and Hannah, two of Aunt Hende's daughters, I said, after shaking hands with the guest:

"Arye, you must be a fast runner now, for you look as skinny as a hunting dog."

The girls liked my dig, as their cousin Arye considered himself above them and very often had snubbed them, and they burst into laughter. I, however, had to pay for my indiscretion by a smack in the face from mother that sounded like a thunderbolt.

Mother sought advice from Aaron David, the barber, as to what kind of food to give her son to make him strong and fat in a short time; and he suggested good soup and meat at least once a day, and Bavarian beer mixed with sugar and cream twice daily.

This Aaron David did not actually perform the duties of a barber, although he was known by that title, since no one really shaved in those days. He would cut hair once in a while, but chiefly he acted as assistant to the physician when one was called in from Kovno to attend a patient.

Aaron David had influence with the authorities, because he could speak their language and was a good mixer. He was a clever mimic and the life of any party he attended. Some of the wealthy men he knew had to pay him tribute to hold his tongue about their affairs which were a bit cloudy, or about their sons' trying to avoid military service. Generally, he was feared and regarded as not very reliable; but he was a "good fellow" with those he liked.

He treated our family very well, and the advice he gave mother on this occasion proved so effective that within six weeks my brother Aron looked better than ever, and was ready to return to his home in Woronowo, near Wilno.

Although he tried his hand at various ventures, Brother Aron was never successful and had to be helped by father and by us as long as he lived. He married three times and had twenty-two children, eighteen of whom are still alive. Although he was not a man of learning, and lived poorly, he was the leader of his town. He attained the age of seventy-seven, outliving four of his brothers in America.

My brother, Hirsh, or Harris, next to Arye in age, was an entirely different type of person. He had a mind as clear as crystal and as sharp as a razor. He was straightforward and honest, and would not tell a lie except in a case of great emergency. Possessing an exceptionally fine sense of humor, he was always ready to joke and have fun at the expense of himself and others.

His burning desire for knowledge and learning knew no bounds, and despite the fact that he had received no education except to a limited extent in Hebrew, he had acquired at the age of twenty, through self-study, a reputation as a scholar in the field of Jewish literature. He possessed, besides, a wealth of knowledge in world literature, and could speak, read and write perfectly Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian and German. Before he left Russia, he also had a reading knowledge of English and French. All this was no mean accomplishment for a poor Jewish village boy who had to be his own instructor.

Because of their difference in character, ambition and temperament, my two elder brothers did not get along very well. Arye used to call Hirsh, "the crazy one," and Hirsh would wittily criticize Arye as a show-off. Arye usually went about feeling peeved and disappointed because he found the good things in life were so difficult to attain; but Hirsh was always happy, always in good humor and good spirits, and ever ready with his clever satire and funny pranks.

Among the tricks Hirsh played in his childhood, I remember one which created a great deal of argument and excitement.

One evening, as my mother was preparing to go to bed, she instructed her niece, Beile, who lived with us, to put away a large pitcher of milk in the bottom of the dresser, lock the dresser and put the key on the chair near her bed. Brother Harris overheard this and, standing in a corner unobserved, watched Beile carry out the order and then leave to see a friend. After she left, he quietly opened the dresser to take out the milk. Then a dreadful accident happened. While feeling around in the dark for the milk, he upset the pitcher and the contents spilled on the bottom of the dresser, overflowing on to the floor. Nearby, Aunt Hende's cat was slumbering peacefully, unaware of what was coming her way. Just as she woke and was about to help herself to a good drink of milk, Harris, the rascal, grabbed the cat and forced her head down into the pitcher, so that she could not easily free herself, and then called loudly for help.

Mother hurried out, stood there for a while bewildered, and then began to bewail her fate.

"My good God," she cried, "what have I done that you mete out Job's punishment on me. During the day I have no peace, and at night I get no rest. Instead of some help from my children and relatives, I have only aggravation, trouble and losses! A full pitcher of fresh milk—God's gift and my hard labor—on the floor like dishwater! Woe is me! I shall not let this pass off easily!"

The cat was with some difficulty pulled out of the pitcher and the floor cleaned up, and mother went back to bed with a vow that there would be a thorough investigation the following morning and may God help the guilty ones!

The next morning there was indeed an uproar. The Jewish women in those days, overworked and overstrained, most of them at the point of nervous prostration, would flare up at the slightest occasion; and since this incident was really a cause for excitement, milk being a precious commodity in our household, the shouting and quarreling could be heard from one end of the town to the other.

Beile was charged with three offenses: First, that she had not locked the dresser; second, that she had not placed the key on the chair; and third, that she had had the audacity to lie to her aunt and claim she had done exactly as she was told to do. Aunt Hende was scolded by mother for not keeping her cat in her own house — and since she herself and her children did not have enough to eat, what business did she have to keep a cat altogether? Although Aunt Hende, as previously described, was a little hungry-looking, frail-appearing person, she could stand her ground and outtalk and outscream any woman at any time, especially when she knew she was not at fault.

While all this commotion was going on, Hirsh, the real culprit, stood by, making funny remarks and enjoying the scene.

Later on, however, when the truth came out, Hirsh defended his action with the statement that there is a saying, "An emergency breaks iron"; that there was a great emergency, and the cat was not made of iron, and he did not have to break her, so he used her to save himself.

He played another trick, of which I was the intended victim, but he was only partially successful.

Cooked prunes were considered a delicacy in those days, especially the way mother prepared them. Father used to say that they tasted like manna from heaven. They were prepared only for special holidays, during which time the children were treated to a few each day.

One afternoon Harris somehow discovered where a half-potful of these delicious prunes were kept by mother, and helped himself to his heart's content. Knowing that mother would surely notice the shortage and that an investigation would follow, he confided to me where the prunes were kept and encouraged me to go and eat all I wanted. But no sooner had I tasted a few, than mother appeared on the scene, and I was caught redhanded. I had to save myself by running to the Synagogue, where I waited outside for the evening prayers.

I did not realize that I had been betrayed by my brother, until I saw him approach the Synagogue, where he stood outside, unaware of my presence, breaking the pits of prunes which he had taken along in his pocket, eating them and discarding the pieces on the ground. I said nothing to him, but after the services picked up the discarded pits and went home, ready for trouble.

To my surprise, no attempt was made to punish me, mother merely remarking quietly:

"You are lucky that your father is such a saint and does not think it proper to disturb the pleasantness of the holidays over a rascal like you."

Since I was not permitted to answer, I could not prove my innocence, nor the treachery of my brother. The only satisfaction I had was to throw a handful of the broken pits into the face of the traitor on the following day and make him admit his guilt. He gave me a small piece of a pencil to atone for his wrongdoing and as a compensation for the damage done to my feelings. Our fondness for each other, which was always very strong, did not suffer in the least by reason of this incident.

* * *

Among the vivid memories of my childhood were the various religious holidays. The High Holidays, Rosh Ha-shanah and Yom Kippur (the New Year and the Day of Atonement), were regarded as the most important and most holy days of the year. They were awaited with awe and fear, and we were all glad when they were over. The fasting for half a day on the two days of the New Year and the whole day on Yom Kippur, and the continuous praying and weeping in the little overcrowded, ill-ventilated synagogue betokened the ending of the warm, sunny summer days and reminded us of the bitter cold winter which lay ahead. As a whole, these days were regarded, especially by the children, as but a necessary evil.

Passover, on the other hand, was a happy and joyous holiday, bringing a whole week of pleasure and freedom. As early as four weeks before Passover we began to enjoy the atmosphere of the holiday. The house was thoroughly cleaned and whitewashed. All of the dishes had to be replaced, and some new article of wearing apparel purchased for each member of the family, as well as something new for the home.

On one occasion when father came home for Passover, he brought among other things a large kerosene lamp. It created a sensation. Up to that time, the only light we had was furnished by cheap tallow candles, which gave out more smell than light. The big new lamp, which we called "the hanging lamp," because it was attached to the ceiling, lighted up the whole room. It was to us not only a joy and a pleasure, but also a wonder. One could actually regulate the light as he wanted it, bright or dim, and it would burn for hours and hours, even through a whole night, without any of the attention that had to be given to candles!

The Passover services were very much shorter than those on the High Holidays, and the praying was of a different character. Instead of lamenting and begging forgiveness for sins we had never committed, we prayed only in song, praising the glory of God for freeing the Jews from bondage in Egypt, and listened to the cantor chanting with enthusiasm the story of how the

Jews crossed the Red Sea and escaped from the cruel Egyptian hordes.

The sun also helped us to celebrate the holiday by shining bright and warm, ushering in the spring with flowers and green grass, and arousing anticipation of the coming summer months, when we had three weeks vacation from the uninviting Hebrew School and the harsh teacher, and could run around outside and go swimming. That was really living.

One Passover the usual holiday atmosphere was clouded by one of my brother Harris' little remarks. It happened in this wise.

Father gave our oldest brother, Aron, a rouble to buy himself a necktie as a gift for the Passover. This was rather extraordinary, as no one in our family, nor in any family we knew, wore a necktie. Once in a while, when Herr Ashfort and his friends rode through the street in a carriage, we noticed that they wore ties and collars. Now Brother Aron was also to have a necktie, and be looked upon as an aristocrat. There was much excitement in the household. Aron went to Kovno to purchase his tie, but when he came back he refused to show it to anyone until we were all assembled for the first "seder," or feast night.

The "seder" lasts, as a rule, from three to four hours. The food is of the very best, and during the feast there are prayers. Every member of the family drinks four glasses of wine, in celebration of the freeing of the Jews from slavery. It might be appropriate to remark here that as far as is known in the history of the world, the Jews were the first to abolish slavery. The two "seder" nights of the Passover were in those days considered by Jews as a reward for all the misery, poverty and oppression they had suffered during the whole year.

When we came from the Synagogue on the first night of Passover and sat down at the table under the bright light of the hanging lamp, everybody full of joy and happiness, Brother Aron entered, wearing the long-awaited necktie. It was of all imaginable colors, and was very bright and attractive, and we looked with envy and respect upon him.

Father asked Aron to come over, so that he could feel the tie, and upon doing so, remarked:

"You are not a good buyer. You only looked at the colors, but not at the quality. This tie will not last very long. Look at what your brother Harris has around his neck. It doesn't gleam and it isn't bright. Yet he has had it for four years, and it is still strong."

What Brother Harris wore as a tie was a strip torn off from an old scarf that father had had for ten or twelve years. It was simply a piece of rag, but it was strong.

"Harris will have this for years," father continued, "and yours will be gone by next Passover."

These remarks brought gloom to the face of Brother Aron, and smiles to our faces, and in the silence that followed, Harris got up, went over to Aron, patted him on the back, and said:

"Don't be discouraged. I will tell you what I will do. I will help you out. I will trade with you."

This dig, added to the humiliation he felt by reason of father's censure, was too much for Aron, and he simply went wild. He took a glass of wine which stood near him and dashed it in the face of Brother Harris, at the same time giving him a push, so that he fell down, and a kick into the bargain.

Harris' inability to resist making a clever comment thus spoiled the first few days of that Passover. It was finally arranged that Aron and father go back and change the tie for one better, stronger and more durable, and peace was again restored.

* * *

Some time later, Harris left for Wilno, the largest city in Lithuania, and known throughout Jewry as a place of piety and learning. He went there to continue his studies of the Talmud and to prepare for the rabbinate.

By this time we were five brothers. Arye (or Aron), the oldest, was married and away from home. Hirsh (or Harris), the second one, was studying and also away from home. I, Beril (or Bernard), the third, Henach (Henry), the fourth, and David, the fifth, were still at home. A sixth son, Samuel Baruch, was born shortly before I left Poniemon.

In relating the story of my brother, Henach, I must introduce a fascinating character who was a close friend of my father — a blacksmith by the name of Nahum. His popularity was due to the fact that he was a man of great piety and learning, well versed in the Talmud and Jewish lore. It was not known where or how he had acquired his vast fund of knowledge, and though he worked hard in his blacksmith shop from twelve to fourteen hours a day, he still found time for study and discussion of knotty problems of the Talmud with the Rabbi. Occasionally he would speak in the Synagogue on Sabbath afternoons, interpreting to the people the great moral teachings of the Rabbis of old, and admonishing his listeners to have faith in God and obey His laws as promulgated by the great teachers of Israel, for in so doing they would find peace and happiness in this world and in the world to come.

His modesty, his simple speech, his sincerity and ability to make everyone understand what he said, endeared him to the hearts of the people. There were rumors that he was a greater Talmudic scholar than the Rabbi, and that he could become ordained if he so desired, but that he refused to do so. He wanted to earn his livelihood, he said, by working for it, for doing manual work to earn one's bread was, according to the laws of God, an honor to men, and not a disgrace, as was the opinion among some Jews.

My father, who was an admirer of Nahum, explained to him that his son, Henach (Henry), a strong, husky boy, had great inclinations to become an artisan instead of studying the Talmud.

He, therefore, asked Nahum to take him into his shop and teach him the blacksmith trade; and also for an hour or two each day, give him lessons in the Bible.

The bargain was made, and Brother Henach worked as a blacksmith in Poniemon for a few years. He then left for Odessa, Russia, where he worked for several years in a bed factory. Later he came to Chicago and eventually became a manufacturer of metal beds, dealing with all the big business houses in Chicago and elsewhere.

I being now the oldest of the brothers at home and next to mother in authority during father's absence, felt and acted as if I were the head of the family. I attended to the correspondence between my father and my two brothers, kept the books for mother, and helped in the selling of the dairy products of our two cows, consisting of home-made cheese and butter. Every now and then, I had to go to Kovno with these products, peddle them around and sell them for the highest prices obtainable.

I started to chum around with the Bregstone boys, Joseph and Ike, who were friends of my brother, Hirsh. These two brothers, sons of Shaane Bregstone, were known as the finest youngsters in the community. They were good looking, good mixers, and had fine singing voices, often singing the songs the Cantor used to chant on the High Holidays. They always smiled and seemed happy, and were all-around likeable boys.

Occasionally I would climb up the hills to their farm, known, as I have mentioned before, as "The Bregstones of the Mountain." Their mother always received me cordially and treated me as one of the family, inviting me to dinner whenever I came. This meal usually consisted of potatoes, sour milk, pickles and bread, food of which I was very fond — and did I eat!

One of my ambitions while on their farm was to get well acquainted with their dogs, and this I finally succeeded in doing. When I played with them without being bitten, I was as happy as could be. I remember once returning home with the boys singing and the three dogs playing around us. I felt almost as important as Herr Ashfort.

Several years later these two Bregstone brothers left Poniemon for other parts of Russia, and finally landed in New York, where they changed their name to Breakstone. They started a retail milk business on the East Side, developed it into a wholesale cream and butter business, became very wealthy, and established the firm of "Breakstone Bros., Incorporated, Cheese Manufacturers." One of the brothers, Yossel, or Joseph, died a few years ago, and the business is carried on under the same name by the remaining brother, Itzig, or Ike. Both have many fine children and grandchildren, and the Breakstone family in this country now runs into many hundreds. Most of them belong to the middle class, and quite a good many are manufacturers, merchants and professional men. In Chicago, we have a well known surgeon of this family, Dr. Benjamin Breakstone. Another member of the family was Philip Bregstone, who died a few years ago. He was a journalist and historian and published a book entitled, "The History of the Jews in Chicago." Still another member, Dr. Levy, is a recognized expert in nervous ailments, and is married to the daughter of Chicago's well known philanthropist and merchant, Julius Rosenwald.

CHAPTER II

STARTING OUT IN THE WORLD

The time had now come for me to decide what I was to do. When father came home, the question of what was to become of Beril was often discussed. For me to remain at home was out of the question, although mother needed me badly, as I was a great help to her. My own ambition was to go to Germany, generally called in Poniemon, Preussen or Prussia, and my reasons for wanting to go there were as follows:

First, it was not far from home, and in case of any emergency, I would have my parents and Poniemon nearby, although I did not intend ever to return. However, I felt it best to be on the safe side, so that if, God forbid, something unforeseen should occur, I would have my parents to fall back on.

Second — Germany had just won the war with France, and had taken Alsace-Lorraine from that country — two very rich provinces — in addition to five billions of marks in indemnity, and Germany was prosperous. I often heard men talk about the good business conditions there, and was very much impressed.

Third — From the Maurishheit family, from Herr Kinzler and his wife, who used to do work for the Jewish families on the Sabbath, and from August Norts, the carpenter, I had learned to understand the German language sufficiently well to get along in it. I also had become fond of these Germans, because they were so nice and clean and punctual in paying for whatever they bought from us; and in general, they seemed more intelligent and more reliable than other Gentiles I knew. Also, my Uncle Michael used to talk a great deal about the Germans who lived in Kovno; though I used to pity the German children because the poor creatures had to eat food that was not kosher and go to church instead of to the synagogue.

Uncle Michael, my mother's brother, was an exceptional type of person. With his blond hair, blond beard and blue eyes, he looked more like an Aryan than a Jew. He was a friendly, contented and happy man, and very sentimental. At anything funny he would burst out into laughter, and at anything sad, you could see his eyes filling with tears. He had a fine sense of humor, and liked to listen to a good joke as much as to the preaching of the Rabbi about the destruction of the Temple. He loved children, and they loved him. To visit Uncle Michael was a holiday for us. We would be treated to tea with sugar in it, and cake, and often were given a few coins.

My uncle was a very honest and pious man, and at prayers in the Synagogue, especially on the High Holidays, his lamentations could be heard blocks away. He would dance, jump, make gestures with his hands outstretched to God, and generally work himself into hysterics. I once saw him on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), when the Cantor was chanting the prayer: "Look down from Heaven, oh God, and see how we have become the laughing stock of the nations, and are treated like sheep ready for slaughter." I thought my good pious uncle would collapse any minute. He was working with every muscle and straining every nerve in his body, with tears flowing over his face and prayer book, the while he was trying to persuade God and induce Him to look down from Heaven and see for Himself how badly we had been treated.

Exactly what his business was I do not know, except that he used to buy various articles for a German in Kovno, whom he had met there some years before. The man had taken a fancy to him, and had started doing business with him. Evidently Uncle must have made good money through that connection, for he lived comparatively well. He was always talking about and praising the Germans, telling us how good, nice and honest they were.

All these things influenced me in deciding to go to Germany. I spoke about it to my father, who was preparing to go away for several weeks, and he suggested that I wait until he returned, and then arrangements would be made for me to go to Koenigsberg, in Preussen. I was overjoyed at the prospect, and went to see Frau Maurishheit every few days, to have her teach me the German alphabet. However, something happened which altered my plans.

My mother had a relative by the name of Ishaya, a venerable-looking man with a white beard and a face like a patriarch. He was a "maggid," a preacher. He used to travel from town to town, giving lectures on the Talmud and on the Commentaries of the Talmud, incidentally getting in on some good meals and picking up a few roubles here and there.

Just at the time when I was talking and dreaming about my journey to Germany, Rabbi Ishaya came to Poniemon and, of course, stopped at our house. His coming used to confuse my mother. In one way she was pleased at having a chance to boast about the big men we had in the family, but he also was a burden and an expense to her. Whereas he would stay only a few days with people in other towns, when he came to Poniemon he would stay at our house for a full two or three weeks. He would tell mother that her cooking was so good for his health, that after he had stayed with us a fortnight, he was an entirely different Ishaya — he could study better, preach better and sleep better.

My clever brother Harris once remarked: "Let us hope that once in a while he will be strong and healthy, sleep better and study better and become a different Ishaya — on other people's food also!"

On this particular occasion, however, when mother saw him coming, she ran to meet him, bade him welcome and gleefully exclaimed:

"I am always glad when you come, but this time I am happier than ever, because I have a very important decision to make, and I want your advice."

This did not augur well for me. I saw that my destiny was at stake, but I could say nothing. I gave him my hand, and uttered the usual greeting, "Peace be to you, Uncle."

Ishaya took off his overcoat, sat down and smoothed his long gray beard.

"With God's help," he said to my mother, "I hope to give you the right advice, but first of all, let us have tea. After the tea, I have to go to the Synagogue for services, and with God's help, tomorrow we can talk about private matters."

The next day, just as I had surmised, mother told him about the plan to send me to Germany, and asked for his opinion.

Ishaya was not a very pleasant person, and not very friendly, especially toward children. I heard him say once that children were a nuisance, though necessary, to be sure. Calling me over, he asked me a few questions, to determine what I knew of the Bible and the Talmud, and then gave mother his opinion.

"Germany," he said, "is dangerous to all Jews, and more so to youngsters like Beril." (Alas, how truly his prophesy has been fulfilled under Hitler's regime!) "As soon as they get there," he averred, "they stop going to the Synagogue to pray, and little by little they stop praying altogether, become indifferent as to whether the food they eat is kosher or not, and even forget that they are Jews."

He advised, therefore, that since my brother, Harris, was in Wilno, I should go there and spend at least two years, attending a school which he knew to be one of the best in that city. He offered to write to the head teacher of the school and ask him to keep an eye on me all the time and pump as much Torah into me as possible. After the end of two years, it might or might not be wise to let me go to Koenigsberg. In principle, he was against anyone going to that Godless country.

He asked me what I thought of the idea, and I, feeling angry and disappointed, answered rather harshly, "Like pepper in my eyes."

He slapped my face, called me an impudent loafer and told me to get out of his sight. Later he remarked to mother that he was sure I had already tasted the poison of unbelief. In that he was right, for in my heart of hearts I thought very little of that class of fanatical Jews.

A few weeks later, when father came home, the matter was decided, and I had to get ready to go to Wilno. The date was set, and father and I wrote to Hirsh when to expect me.

While I was making preparations to leave, I suggested to mother, that Moishe, the son of Yakir, the Melamed, come with me. This Yakir, who subsequently died from under-nourishment, had been one of my teachers when I started to study the Bible and the Talmud. Moishe used to be my partner when his father gave me instruction, or as we used to phrase it, he would "learn the Talmud with me." Unfortunately, Moishe was not very bright, and could not grasp the meaning of the complicated Talmudic discussions to suit his father.

Yakir believed firmly in the use of a strong arm for dumb pupils. He often averred that "the only and best method to make scoundrels study and understand is to make good use of the whip, the stick and the fist. One has to force their will to study by knocking it into their heads, or they will never get anywhere."

He liked to tell the fathers of his pupils about the instructions Czar Nicholas, the First, once gave to the generals of the Russian Army. During his reign, and for a long time during the regimes of his successors, the training of soldiers was accompanied by corporal punishment. Lashing was the penalty for the most trivial offense or for failure to learn the military rules quickly enough. Every officer had the right to punish a soldier with a certain number of lashes on his bare body, the number of lashes being dependent on the rank of the officer. Thus, a second lieutenant was entitled to, say twenty lashes, and these increased in number according to the rank of the officer, until the strokes sometimes numbered enough to cause death. According to Reb Yakir, Nicholas, the First, had ordered his generals to be very liberal with the "knout," for, "If out of twenty soldiers," he said, "you flog nineteen to death, and give me one good one, I will be satisfied." Where Reb Yakir got his information was a mystery, but he liked the method and often talked about it.

One afternoon, when Moishe and I were learning the laws, by-laws and comments about divorce, the question arose as to how many witnesses were necessary to deliver a divorce to the wife, not by the husband, but by a messenger, in order to make it valid.

I knew the answer and wanted to reply, but Yakir stopped me and insisted that Moishe answer. The poor fellow did not know, and kept quiet. His father repeated the question several times, and when he received no reply, he became enraged, took hold of a heavy stick, lifted it over Moishe's head, and shouted: "Will you answer or not?"

Moishe looked up, his eyes on the stick, ready with his hand to stop the blow from falling too harshly upon him, but said nothing.

Just at that moment, my brother, Hirsh, came in, and when he saw the predicament Moishe was in, he grasped Yakir's hand, and said:

"Wait! If the question you want him to answer were a secret which he knew and you did not, and he refused to reveal it to you, then it might be proper for you to try and force him to answer. But here the matter is reversed. You know it and he does not; then it is for you to tell him what the answer is. How can he answer when he does not know? Do you think that striking him with the stick will bring the answer from him, just as Moses struck the stone with his stick and brought water from it?

"You know, Reb Yakir," my brother continued, "he was a different Moishe, or Moses. He was Moishe, our teacher, but your Moishe is just a little boy — a pupil trying to learn and understand."

Reb Yakir was confused and embarrassed, not knowing what to say. The argument was too strong for him. Then, I, thinking it clever, butted in with the remark:

"Perhaps Reb Yakir thinks Moishe's head is made of stone."

"Yes, yes," Yakir agreed, "a stone head, a stone head, and that is my son!" And swinging the stick, he shouted, "I will yet knock some knowledge into your dumb stony head."

Thinking to show friendship to my mother, Reb Yakir insisted that I remain beside him during the services on the special day of mourning known as "Tishabaov," commemorating the destruction of the Temple. On that day, not only was one expected to weep, but to tear out one's very heart with weeping. During the evening services, lasting about four hours, the entire congregation would sit upon the floor, each person holding a candle in one hand and the Book of Lamentations in the other.

Reb Yakir was particularly vehement as he chanted the Hebrew lines: "Our land was taken from us — our Temple destroyed, and our possessions given to strangers. God, our God — see what has happened to us! Woe to us!"

I was amazed to see my Rabbi as overcome with anguish as though all this had happened to him personally — as though he, himself, had just suffered a major calamity. His tears overflowed upon the candle and the book.

At intervals, the congregation paused in their lamenting, and the Cantor and the choir would take up the refrain. By the time the services were over, every person in the hot, crowded, ill-ventilated room was wringing wet with tears and perspiration, and half-dead from the emotional strain.

Since then, whenever anything terrible has happened in Jewish life, this scene has recurred vividly to my mind, and especially today, when I read of the fate of the Jews of Europe, does this picture present itself to me again.

The word "Yakir" means, in Hebrew, "dearest" or "darling." Brother Harris, who could not resist speaking up when the occasion seemed to warrant, made no exception even at the funeral of Reb Yakir, using the meaning of his name to point his remarks.

The services were held in the two rooms where the deceased had lived with his wife and two sons, one of whom was a cripple. The man who officiated and made the eulogy (it was not the Rabbi of the town), said among other things that the departed was precisely as his name indicated — "Yakir," meaning "dearest" — he was dearest to all of us.

At this point, Brother Harris interrupted:

"Oh, no," he said, "he was not dear to you or to anyone in town. If he were as you say, then those who considered him so dear would have seen to it that he had enough to eat, and a doctor and medicine when he was sick. But that was not done. You let him suffer hunger, you let him starve, you let him die, without anyone helping him. What you say is not true — he was not dear to you. The only one to whom he was dear was God, and that is why He took him away from you, so that He could care for him in Heaven, as he deserved."

These remarks created a commotion, and the widow fainted in the arms of a woman standing beside her. The speaker commanded silence, and said it was a sin for anyone to create a disturbance at a funeral, and that the impudent rascal would have to answer to the Almighty for being so disrespectful to Reb Yakir and his friends.

"It was the will of God," he shouted, "that Reb Yakir should depart from this world, and no human being has any right to question the ways of God." Turning his eyes on the corpse, he said, "Forgive us, Reb Yakir, for the disrespect shown to you by a little ignorant fellow.

"Let no one mention what has happened here," he then cautioned the assemblage, "for it is a terrible sin to do so." And the matter was thus suppressed.

Little Moishe, son of Reb Yakir, was now an orphan, poor, hungry, half-naked. He used to come to our house for something to eat. I felt very sorry for him, and very often asked mother to give him an old coat or some money, which she did.

When I suggested to mother that Moishe come with me to Wilno, she asked: "But how? The fare to Wilno costs a fortune."

Thus far only two people from our town had ever gone to Wilno by train. Uncle Michael once went there on business for his German, and when he returned he was kept busy for weeks telling of his "riding with the machine." (In those days, people called the train, "the machine".) He was not one to brag or boast of his accomplishments, but merely liked to give uninvited information and advice. Often I heard him remark: "May God help every deserving Jew to enable him to ride with the machine."

"It is unbelievable," he would say. "You sit just as in your house, not afraid of rain or snow, no horse dragging you through rivers of mud; you are not afraid of being tipped over and thrown out — but with joy and pleasure you look through the window and see yourself flying, flying past houses and people and trees, like a wind.

"I hope," he would add, "God will let me live long enough to have another chance to ride on the machine before I die."

The only other person from our town who had gone to Wilno on the "machine" was my brother, Harris. Now, to have this great experience all alone was not enough for me! I wanted

Moishe, Yakir's son, to keep me company. It turned out that this was not hard to accomplish after all. The fare was less than expected, being only a few roubles, and my father donated a little and obtained some money from several people "for Reb Yakir's orphan," and the two of us started out.

I put my belongings, which were not many, in a sack; and mother gave me a half potful of cooked prunes to take along, covered up with muslin and tied many times around with a heavy cord. She cautioned me at least a dozen times about the pot of prunes — first, God forbid, not to drop and break it; and second, not to open it until I got to my brother, Hirsh, and then to eat it sparingly with bread so that it would last a long time, for such a "meichel," or delicacy in food, was not to be found everywhere.

Mother sent for Meier, the expressman, to come with his "Herring" and wagon to our house. "Herring" was our nickname for his horse, which was a hungry-looking, skinny nag. Father was not able to go with us to the station, and asked Nachum, "the little one," husband of Freida Leah, to show us the way, as he was going somewhere near Kovno. Generally, women were designated as the wives of their husbands, but with Nachum it was the reverse, because he was a very short fellow, while his wife was a tall, husky woman. Therefore, he was designated as "the husband of Freida Leah."

We got to the station long before train time, and Moishe and I decided to look around and investigate things. We took turns. First, I went out to investigate and Moishe watched the luggage. His baggage consisted of half a loaf of bread, a prayer book, a book of Psalms, two sour pickles and his "Tefillin," or phylacteries. When I came back, he went out to see what he could find, and he did find something rather different from what he expected.

He had crossed the rails, which was forbidden, and had begun "snooping" around, when a Russian, not a Litvak, mind you, presented him with two Russian punches in the face, and chased him back to the station. Slaps and all kinds of beatings were not new to Moishe, for he got plenty of those from his father or from other friendly people who wanted him to grow up to be a good, pious man; but they were all Jews, and a beating from a Jew was not so humiliating and certainly not so painful as one from a "Goy," especially a Russian.

Moishe thought the punches terrible and a sign that the beginning of the journey was not very promising, and felt somewhat resentful; but just then we had to get on the train, and I forgot about his unpleasant experience. Though not for long. We both sat down at open windows, and I looked out, watching everything that was going on, thinking of all the wonders Uncle Michael had described so minutely, and enjoying myself immensely. Several men with red caps were standing near the train, evidently watchmen or switchmen — at any rate, officials of the Government. All of a sudden I saw Moishe, who was sitting at the open window in front of me, holding a large piece of wood in his hand, and before I could prevent him, he leaned out and hit one of the red-capped men over the head with it, so that the man fell down. And as if that were not enough, he stuck his head out of the window, and still brandishing the piece of wood, shouted: "Sabbaka!" ("Dog.") That word every boy knew.

I was terribly frightened and expected all kinds of trouble. The poor man shook his fist at us, but in a few minutes, fortunately for us, the train moved on, and he was soon out of sight.

"Why did you do that?" I shouted at Moishe.

"Well," he said, "that was in payment for the punches I got at the station."

"But that man did not hit you," I exclaimed.

"Oh," he answered, "these Russians are all alike. One is as bad as another, so what is the difference?"

It was a seven-hour ride from Kovno to Wilno. In about half that time the novelty of "riding with the machine" wore off, and we began to experience the unpleasant side of the ride. The smoke from the engine blackened our baggage, our clothes and our faces, and got into our luggage. My companion coughed up some black slime, which frightened him. He said it looked like ink, and I advised him not to waste it, then, as ink was an expensive article.

Soon our hearty appetites, which had been somewhat suppressed by excitement, called attention to our food supplies. Moishe and I shared his black bread, herring and pickles and my white bread, cheese and hard-boiled eggs. Then the question of the prunes came up. This was not as difficult a problem to solve as the divorce question, especially for Moishe, as he knew what was in the pot, and he eyed it with great concern. I told him about the promise I had made to my mother not to open the pot until we met my brother, Hirsh, in Wilno, but what do you think this foolish boy answered? He said to me, after thinking hard for a minute or two:

"You promised your mother not to open it, and you must keep your promise, but I did not promise her anything, and I will open it."

I thought his answer so clever that I told him he had earned some prunes, and let him open the dish. It goes without saying, of course, that if I had not been as anxious as he to get at the prunes, his answer would not have seemed so clever to me!

When I looked at the inviting fruit, I remembered the trick Hirsh had once played on me, which I have related here, and I felt justified in eating as much as we wanted. However, we were careful not to overdo it, and reached Wilno with more than half the prunes still untouched.

Hirsh met us at the railroad station, and told us that we did not look at all well. He was right. The smoke and dust had done a good job, covering us from head to foot. As usual, Hirsh had to say something funny, so he remarked:

"If not for your voices, I wouldn't know which was which."

He took us to his headquarters, called the "Kremers' Klaus," or "the shopkeeper's little synagogue." On the way, he stopped at a corner and bought a spoonful of mashed potatoes from a woman for one groshen — a half of a cent, eating it from the spoon. When I refused his offer to treat me to a spoonful, because it looked too dirty, he retorted that I had swallowed enough dirt on the way to Wilno, and a little more wouldn't hurt me.

"The Shopkeeper's Synagogue" was a small place, and its members were men belonging to the middle class. It had sleeping accommodations on the floor for seven students. Every place was taken, but my brother persuaded a student, named Sinai, who slept next to him, to move further to the wall and make room for me between them. I strongly demurred to such arrangements. I did not want to sleep on the floor; I did not want to sleep on a straw sack; and I did not want to sleep sandwiched in like a herring.

"Well," said my brother, "tonight you must sleep here, as there is no other place, but tomorrow I will ask the Shamesh (beadle) of the Shul to let you sleep in his house, and father will pay him a little something for it. But," added Hirsh, "do not expect to find a palace there like Ashfort's."

The Shamesh was a man of sixty-five, tall, husky, with a long beard, half blind and very rude. My brother arranged with him to give me a bed in his house for one rouble a month, and the next evening I went home with him. He lived with his wife and an orphan niece of hers in two rooms, with a little nook which, since it contained a stove, they called a kitchen. The wife was a friendly woman, and told me she didn't care so much for the rouble, as that she wanted to help along a boy who was willing to learn God's holy Torah. She also told me, confidentially, that should I at any time feel hungry and have no place to get a meal, to come to her house and she would feed me something. This woman's kindness and encouragement helped me forget somewhat my disgust for the whole business.

In addition to taking care of the Shul, it was the duty of the beadle to procure "eating days" for the students. It was rumored that he was a "grafter." Fellows who had money with which to bribe him would obtain places where they got good food and enough of it, but the others would have to take what they could get. My brother had not given him anything, but since I lived in his house, I had some claim on him for providing for me. After I had spent two nights in his house, he told me that on the next evening, which was Friday, I should stand with him at the exit of the Synagogue after the services, and he would get me a place where I could eat every Sabbath.

At the appointed time I was there standing beside him, waiting. When the people started coming out, my tall, long-bearded benefactor at once began to sing out loudly, in a pitiable, wailing voice:

"God-fearing men, here is a poor orphan, who has no father nor mother, and has no place where to appease his hunger, even on the Sabbath Day. Have pity on him and take him to your house for the Sabbath."

A shudder came over me. I trembled when I heard him say, "orphan." It was considered a terrible appellation, as it was the opinion of many that God punishes the children for the parents. I pulled at his coat and told him I was not an orphan, God forbid; but he pinched my arm savagely and whispered, "Keep your mouth shut, you idiot!"

In a few minutes, I was instructed by one of the men to go along with him. I soon found myself in a well furnished house, with bright lights glittering from candles in silver candlesticks. There were no children in the house, which was occupied only by the man and his wife, who made a very good appearance; and the man's mother, an old woman with an unfriendly, sour-looking face. The master's name, as I learned later, was Wigdor Yaffe. He was about forty years old, and was a bookkeeper for a large concern.

For the moment, things looked very good, and I was happy to have found for Sabbath a fine house with fine people; but I soon felt entirely different.

The younger woman asked me, with noticeable sympathy, where I had come from, how old I was, and how long my parents were dead. Here I was stuck; tears came to my eyes, and I wanted to leave the house. The good woman held me back.

"Oh, I'm sorry I asked you that," she said. "I suppose your father and mother died not long ago, and that misfortune is still fresh before your eyes."

"No! No!" I cried. "For Heaven's sake, do not say my parents are dead. They are alive — may God keep them until the age of a hundred and twenty. It was the beadle who said it, and when I tried to stop him, he pinched me for it."

"Wigdor," called the woman to her husband, "this boy, thank God, is not an orphan, and Sender, the Shamesh, lied to you."

"Oh," replied Wigdor, "he always does that to soften the hearts of the people; otherwise very few would pay any attention to him."

"He should not do that," the wife returned, "You ought to tell it to him, it is not right. Just imagine how this poor boy feels to be called an orphan while his parents are alive."

I stood there all confused, and did not know what my status was — was I wanted or not? The master was pacing up and down the large room, chanting the Friday evening song about the man's difficulty in finding a good woman, a woman who can fill the heart of her husband with absolute confidence, a woman who during her lifetime would reward her husband with everything good and not with anything bad, and who would aid the poor and the needy.

I finally concluded that they had accepted me in the beginning because they thought I was an orphan, and that now that they had found out they had been deceived, and I was not an orphan, they would not want me. So, with "A good Sabbath to you," I started for the door. But Mrs. Yaffe restrained me, and insisted that I stay and come to them every Sabbath for all the meals. I remained, of course, but sat down to the table with a strong desire in my heart to get away from the place as soon as possible.

When we were seated, the master chanted the prayer over the wine, and then asked me to do likewise. As a rule, only one person is supposed to make this prayer, including everyone present in the blessing. However, I assumed that he wanted to try me out, so I obeyed, and did my part very well. After that, I believed everything would run smoothly, and would have felt as though I were among friends, were it not for the old woman with her sour face.

There was no maid in the house, and Mrs. Yaffe herself served. For the first course, she brought in a platter of filled fish. She served her husband and the old woman, and then came over to me, placed an appetizing looking portion on my plate, and said smilingly:

"Now, my boy, don't be bashful, and go to it," and returned to the kitchen.

Before I could take hold of my knife and fork, the old woman came over and, without saying a word, cut the piece of fish in half and took one part away. I felt embarrassed and humiliated. The worst of it was that she had held the fish with her unclean fingers while cutting it.

What could I do? I said nothing and sat staring toward the window, wondering what to say if Mrs. Yaffe should ask me what was wrong. She finally noticed I was not eating, and came over.

She asked me the reason, but before I had a chance to answer, the old woman interposed, saying:

"The portion of fish you gave him was too big for such a little boy, and I took part of it away, and for that he feels insulted."

"Mother," said Mr. Yaffe, "you should not have done that. I cannot blame the boy for feeling hurt. Eva," he said to his wife, "bring him the other half."

"No, no," I hastened to say, "please leave it alone," and added, with emphasis, "I will not eat fish tonight and can get along very well without it."

Mrs. Yaffe murmured something which I could not hear, but I could see from her demeanor that she "had it in" for her mother-in-law, not only for this incident, but for many other things.

To make up for the fish I had missed, and no doubt to spite her mother-in-law, Mrs. Yaffe treated me to unusually large portions of the other courses — noodle soup, fried chicken, pickles and cooked pears; and to show my appreciation, I cleaned up every morsel.

When I left, I thanked my hosts and said the food tasted just like my mother's, and she was known to be a very good cook. I wished them all a "Good Shabbos," including the old sour-face, and went away. That was my first experience and first Sabbath meal as a charity student.

Within a comparatively short time, I managed to procure enough places to get enough to eat every day in the week except Tuesday, or the equivalent in money. On three days, I received cash with which I could buy my own meals, and on the other three days, I received three meals a day. If not for an unpleasant conversation which I overheard between a husband and wife, concerning me, I could have had money for Tuesday also, but my pride would not permit it; and since the amount I received for the three days could take care of a fourth, I made no further effort in that direction. The circumstances of this incident were as follows:

One Friday evening I was advised by Mr. Yaffe to go to a certain wealthy man, tell him I was sent by him, and ask him to take care of me on Tuesday of each week. When I got there and rang the bell, I was instructed by the maid to wait in the hall until Mr. Zeman was ready to see me, as he was having breakfast. He soon came out, and I told him my story. He asked me to wait and went back into the house, leaving the door partly open, so that I heard him discussing me with his wife. He proposed to her to have me come for breakfast and dinner, and to give me some food to take along for the evening meal; but his wife objected to giving me anything, especially to letting me come into the house.

"I am not going to let any of those filthy beggars into my house," I heard her say. "Nobody knows what kind of disease they are likely to bring in with them."

That was enough for me, and I quietly left. When Mr. Yaffe asked me whether I had been there, I told him I had, but that they were busy, and that I might go there again.

Moishe, my traveling companion, had during this time been taken by Sender, the beadle, to the Remalish Shul, one of the poorest synagogues in Wilno. A few months later, I heard, he returned to Poniemon with a severe case of eczema. Here he remained but a short time, and then left again for some place or other. What finally became of him I never learned.

I stayed with Sender only five weeks, when I moved away because of a dreadful accident that happened to his little niece. Early one morning, while she was asleep, the big, clumsy Sender, passing by her cot with a pitcher of hot water, slipped and spilled part of it on her face. The poor little six-year-old was half-blinded in one eye and part of her face was marked for life. Her agony and suffering drove me from the house, and I went to live with a poor relative of Mr. Yaffe.

* * *

A strange occurrence now suddenly confronted me, which ever after remained an enigma to me, as well as to my brother, Hirsh. All of a sudden, Hirsh became a religious fanatic. I was actually afraid he would go insane. There was no trace of his usual self. He banished all jollity, wit and humor from his make-up, and prayed and studied from early morning until late at night. He became sombre and sad. I feared meeting him, for he would fall on my shoulders, crying and mumbling that I should be good and not sin; that this world meant nothing; that it had been created by God only for the purpose of testing out the Jews and separating the good from the evil ones, the good ones to become angels in Heaven, and the sinful to go to Gehenna, or Hell, there to be kept in a burning oven for all eternity. I tried to reason with him, but he got worse, so I wrote home, and my father and mother hurried to Wilno.

Father took him to a doctor, who examined him and prescribed some medicine to soothe his nerves. He instructed my father not to let him study for a while and see that he got good food and a great deal of rest; that if he insisted on having books, to get him story books in Hebrew, Yiddish or Russian.

In a week or so, father left, but mother stayed on with us for three weeks, and these were the best three weeks I had in Wilno. Father had obtained a few jobs appraising timberland, making good money thereby, and mother also had managed to save some cash, so we had enough to have a good time, which meant eating in a restaurant daily, drinking tea both morning and afternoon, and strolling about seeing Wilno.

It was wintertime, and the weather was not very pleasant, but we did not mind it. One day I took mother to watch the Russian boys and girls on a skating rink. She admired the youngsters for a while, with their faces flushed and excited from the cold brisk air, as they performed their tricks on the ice; but she soon jumped up as from a dream and said, smiling, but in an irritated tone to cover her smile:

"Ah, my son, as long as you have such foolishness in your head and consider it proper even to bring your mother to see and enjoy the way these ungodly youths spend their time in wild frivolity, then you are not much better than they, and God knows what will become of you."

I strongly suspected that mother did not mean what she said and only made those remarks as a safeguard and warning to me, so I did not comment, except to say:

"Do not be afraid. This is only the third time I have been here, and it will probably be the last."

Brother Harris got well, mother went home, and two months later, a few weeks before Passover, I also went home.

If anyone thought that the five months I spent in Wilno really benefited me, from the point of view of Jewish learning, as Uncle Ishaya had expected, they were sadly mistaken. Not only did I not become more religious or acquire more knowledge, but on the contrary, I was disappointed with the studies, the students, the teachers, and everything else connected with the experience.

I cannot understand now, any more than I did at that time, why parents were so unreasonable as to force youngsters of twelve and thirteen years to strain their minds in the study of the Talmud, when even grown men find it difficult to untangle its knotty, confusing problems. As an example of the sort of thing we had to contend with, I remember our studying the laws of the Sabbath, which is asserted to be a day of rest, with work of any kind prohibited. Now, the question is according to the Mishnah and Talmud, what constitutes "work," and these instances are cited:

If one puts his hand into the yard of his neighbor and gets it full of rain water, and then withdraws it, can you call that labor? Or, may a tailor go out with his needle on Friday, when it is already dark, lest he may forget and carry it with him the whole day of Sabbath? Is it permitted to extinguish a lamp on the Sabbath because one is afraid of robbers, or so that a sick person should be able to sleep? Is it permitted for a woman to go out on Sabbath wearing a gold ornament? There are thousands of such problems, to which there are all kinds of answers and opinions, given by various rabbis who cannot agree.

Furthermore, young boys from small towns which did not have proper Talmudic schools would be sent to larger cities to study, just as I was, and to live at the expense of the community there. No matter how willing the Jewish families were to take care of such students, they could hardly do so properly, most of them being themselves very poor. In most cases, these boys would have to study the whole day and quite often in the evening as well, and live as the poorest of the poor. After spending five months in such an atmosphere, I wondered how anyone could stand it. Yet, in the city where I underwent this experience, there were many hundreds of students between the ages of thirteen and twenty, who were making this study the business of their lives.

Of course, I kept all these thoughts to myself, and still hoped that some day I would be permitted to go to Germany.

My brother, Harris, also became less religious after his recovery, and though not as "bad" as I, subsequently spent a great deal of his time reading Hebrew and Russian novels, which were not considered "kosher," and studying languages, geography, history and similar secular subjects. However, he still retained a certain degree of religious feeling, and soon after Passover, he left for Vilosen, a well known seat of Jewish learning. I did not see him again until he came to America, although I learned that from Vilosen he went to Odessa, where, because of passport difficulties, he had to change his name. He secured employment as a clerk in a hardware store, got married and had two children, changed his name again, went to Palestine, and from there finally came to New York and then to Chicago.

* * *

I was still the greatest problem in the family, and the question persisted —What was to become of me?

However, as mother used to say, "God is good. He provides the hungry with bread, the naked with clothes, the drinker with wine." We all felt He would not forsake me, and He did not.

About two weeks after Passover, my father received a letter containing an offer of steady employment for several years. A dealer in forest timber, named Israel Akabash, had purchased tens of thousands of forest trees from the Russian Government, which had to be removed in a certain time. Mr. Akabash took in two partners, named Lovenstein and Bloch, who were Russian Jews living in Germany. These three men formed a company under the name of Lovenstein & Company, and they wanted father to be the superintendent of their project. He was to secure the proper men to cut the timber and remove it, provide housing for the men, and so forth. His salary was to be fifty roubles a month, plus living expenses.

Father accepted the offer and went to meet Mr. Akabash, returning a few days later with an agreement for the length of time it would take to remove all the timber. The tract was located in Lithuania, about fifty miles from our town and a few miles from a village called Alaburdesh.

My father suggested that I join him there — he would go first and let me know when to follow. He felt I would be useful to him, as I could keep house for him and see that everything was kept in good order. My father was very systematic, and particular about cleanliness and order. He also instructed me to take along a few volumes of the Talmud, so that I could study in my spare time, and he would help me. Father knew the Talmud well.

In a few days he left, and several weeks later I received a letter from him, with money and instructions as to how to get to the place. While I was waiting for his letter, mother had taught me how to cook, wash dishes, and do other housework. I also went to Frau Maurishheit, to learn as much German as possible, as I still hoped to get to Germany sooner or later.

When I was about to leave, I could not locate my father's letter containing his instructions. It seems mother had taken the letter over to Rabbi Avremil, for no other reason, I imagine, than to show him what a great man her husband was.

I could not delay, but had to go, letter or no letter. There was no use asking anyone how to get to Alaburdesh, as no one seemed to know the way. However, I knew that Mr. Akabash lived near there, and since he was very well known, I kept asking for him. I learned that he lived on the main road, about ten miles from the town of Michaleshok.

Saying goodbye, I started on my way. Of course, I walked. My luggage consisted only of some underwear, a prayer book, and cheese, which I carried in a sack tied around my shoulders. The weather was nice, and I did not mind walking. Of course, if I had been able to run as fast as my college grandson, Nat Newman, who has won several running races, and could have kept up that pace continuously, I might have reached my destination in several hours. As it was, it took me two days to get to Mr. Akabash's house.

Here I had an unpleasant experience, the memory of which still fills me with disgust. When I arrived at the house, which looked like a mansion, I rang the bell, and a maid opened the door and told me that the master was not at home. I then asked for Mrs. Akabash, but she would not come to the door until I informed her, through the maid, who I was and what I wanted. When she did come, she did not even ask me in, but coldly described the way to Alaburdesh in such a manner that I could only half understand her.

I later learned that there were two buggies with two fine horses in the barn at the time, and that Mrs. Akabash could easily have had me driven over to my father; yet she would not even let me in the house. I subsequently found that, while Mr. Akabash was a fine man in every respect, his wife was known to be an exceptionally mean person.

It was now seven o'clock in the evening, and I had walked from seven in the morning. My bread and cheese were gone, and though I had some money with me, there were no houses around where I might stop for the night, nor any place where I could buy something to eat. What was I to do?

I hung around for a while, and then started to walk in the general direction that Mrs. Akabash had indicated, and after walking for about an hour, I met a Lithuanian, who showed me a short cut to Alaburdesh. I arrived about nine o'clock, and approaching a house, tried to gain admittance, but the dogs would not let me near the building. My calling and shouting finally brought out the head of the family, who took me into the house, gave me milk and bread and a bench to sleep on. He had eight children, all of whom slept on the floor.

The next morning, the good man hitched up one of his horses and took me to my father. I offered to pay him, but he refused, and accepted only a few drinks of whiskey and a few herring from my father before turning back.

The frame house in which my father, myself and two other men were to live had just been completed. I found that they had already installed dishes, cooking pots, a samovar, tea and sugar, and that all that remained was for me to start my duties as housemaid and cook. That same evening I prepared a meal consisting of fried herring, noodle milk soup and omelet. Father could not get over how good the soup was. He said it was better than mother made. I knew the reason it was. Mother used to mix the milk soup with water, which I did not do, and besides, I added a little sweet cream to the milk, which made it tastier.

Shortly thereafter, we built another place, big enough to house the seventy-five or so Russian workmen whom father had secured from the nearest large Russian city, to fell the trees. Within two months, what had been practically a wilderness, extending for miles, became a beehive of industry, with wagons coming and going, hauling our timber away and bringing supplies for our workers, and so forth.

I soon hired a Lithuanian woman to look after the house and do the cooking, while I busied myself making money on the side, as the opportunity presented itself. It so happened that there was a demand for drinks from the men who came there, so I ordered, along with our food supplies, a few gallons of whiskey, and this I sold for so much a drink. Although father disapproved, I continued despite his objection and was doing fine, saving money every day. However, word of my venture reached the ears of Mr. Lovenstein, and he wrote Mr. Akabash to put a stop to it. Still, when I went home for the Holidays I took with me two hundred roubles, all my own money.

During the time I spent with my father in Alaburdesh, I had my first opportunity to become really acquainted with him. At home, we had seen him only during the holidays, and we were then too busy with other things — attending the lengthy services in the synagogue, eating the big holiday meals and visiting — to get to know him as an individual. The only personal conversations I or my brothers ever had with him consisted of his questioning us about our studies, or about the misdeeds we had committed during his long absences, as reported by our mother, and his criticism and advice. Although we looked upon him with admiration and respect, he was something of a stranger to us, and we did not feel nearly as close to him as we did to our mother.

Now, with both of us alone together in Alaburdesh, things were different. Though my father was kept very busy with the manifold duties relating to his work, he managed to find time to hold long and intimate conversations with me, and to instruct me occasionally in the study of the Talmud. Our talks were like those which take place between two friends, rather than between father and son. Soon he was confiding to me many of the circumstances of his life.

Among these was one of which no one in the family was aware, except mother. Before relating it to me, he warned me that I must never mention it to anyone, especially to mother, who, he said, would be very disturbed if she found out that I knew about it.

This deep secret was that his father, who lived in a village called Sakie, was a tailor. In those days, among the Jews, a tailor or a shoemaker was looked upon as very inferior socially, and it was taken for granted that one so engaged was crude and ignorant, and unfit to associate with any but those of his own class. Father told me that mother was in constant fear that this "ignoble" ancestry of his would be discovered, which would greatly detract from the family's standing in the community.

My paternal grandfather, although a tailor, was a man of wisdom, learning and piety. These virtues were recognized by his townspeople and the local Rabbi to the extent that they offered to support him, so that he might devote all of his time to study. But this offer he refused, insisting upon earning his own livelihood, by manual work. From early morning until late afternoon, he worked for a fellow tailor, and spent the balance of his time in the study of the Talmud and other sacred books.

Father emphasized several times that the manner in which his father earned his living made no difference to him. On the contrary, he said, he would like to see Jews in general, including his own sons, become skilled workmen, so that they would have definite means of earning their livelihood, and not have to wait for some vague opportunity to present itself, as was the case with so many Jewish young men who were trained only in the sacred writings, which training could not be put to any practical use. He had little regard for such individuals, who were commonly known as "Luft Menschen," or aimless people. In this I agreed with him.

I have kept my word to my father until now, this being the first mention I have ever made of our little family secret.

The many discussions I had with my father made me feel very important, and I was proud of the fact that he looked upon me as one worthy of his confidence. I looked up to him in almost everything, except that often, during the time we studied the Talmud together, I felt impelled to disagree with him. Not that I doubted his wisdom, but I felt it rather silly to spend time discussing complex ideas that had nothing to do with practical life.

All in all, we got along wonderfully well, and I was very happy, until this ideal state of affairs was one day suddenly interrupted by a thoughtless act of mine.

For Saturday morning services, father and I would usually walk through the surrounding forest for about three-quarters of an hour, to a neighboring village, where Jews of the district would gather for worship. One Saturday morning, when it was raining heavily, father informed me that he would stay at home and conduct private services with his two Jewish assistants, but that I should go on to the village. I set out in the heavy downpour, in my bulky raincoat and rubbers. Just then a peasant of my acquaintance drove by in his wagon, drawn by two spirited horses, and invited me to ride with him. Without further thought, I jumped in beside him, and off we went.

When I returned home that afternoon, I found my father looking very disturbed and unhappy. I could not imagine what had happened to upset him so much. Before I had a chance to question him as to what was wrong, he exclaimed:

"Do you realize what a crime you committed this morning, on the holy Sabbath?"

It then dawned on me what I had done. My father must have seen me get into the peasant's wagon, and was grieving over my having thus desecrated the Sabbath. As to all orthodox Jews, this was to him an unforgivable sin.

I thought I might explain to him that since, with the fast horses, the ride was but a short one, the sin was accordingly of little consequence. But I said nothing, realizing he would listen to no excuses. He told me that I had destroyed his trust in me — that the joy of the Sabbath had been ruined, and he had not tasted food the whole day because of my transgression. He could not imagine, he said, how it was possible for me to have committed such a heinous offense, unless, God forbid, I was an unbeliever — an atheist!

The next three days were miserable ones for both of us. I finally wrote him a note, appealing to him in the manner of the Jews appealing to God on Yom Kippur for forgiveness. I cited a few phrases from the prayers of that day, which state that in the eyes of God, repentance averts judgment.

When he had read the letter, which I had pinned to his pillow the night before, he said:

"I see that you are sincere and that you realize the enormity of your crime against our religion, and I will have to forgive you."

In spite of his words, however, there was afterward a certain reserve on my part toward him, and we did not get back on the same old friendly footing of happy companionship for quite a while.

* * *

When I came home with my precious savings, I told my parents that I felt I was independent and that I could use this money as

I saw fit, since it was all mine and no one had helped me earn it. I also informed them that soon after the Holidays, I planned to leave for Germany. Father consented to my going, and a few weeks later I headed for Koenigsberg, finally realizing my dreams.

The day before I left, I overheard a discussion between my parents concerning my journey. Mother thought that it was risky and unfair on their part to let their son, a mere youngster, travel alone from one country to another, crossing frontiers without a passport and without anyone to guide him. She, therefore, proposed that father go with me to Wirbalen, on the Russian border, and wait there until I was safely across on the German side.

Father, however, demurred to this proposition, asserting that I was old enough to take care of myself; that he had no time, and that it would be expensive for him to go with me. He would give me a letter, he said, to a friend of his at Wirbalen, who would arrange for me to cross the frontier without any difficulty.

But mother insisted and, as usual, had her way. I was not overjoyed at this, for I really felt that father was right — I was no longer a little boy who needed to be led around by the hand. I wanted to be independent and free to do as I chose. I was a Bar Mitzvah. Knowing, however, that mother would have her way anyhow, I said nothing, and the next day my father and I left for Wirbalen.

We arrived at noon, and by six o'clock in the afternoon of the same day I was in Eydkuhnen, on the German side of the border line — and an hour later was on my way to Koenigsberg.

Any attempt to cross the border without a proper passport was a serious offense under the laws of the Russian Government, and being caught meant severe punishment. But six roubles in cash to the right party fully took care of the law, and I had very little difficulty in the matter.

Most of the people in the car with me were traveling without passports, and while we were on the Russian side, they were restless and nervous; but as soon as the Russian passport controller, with his three gendarmes, left the car and the train began to move, they began to look happier. When we stopped for an hour at Eydkuhnen, on the German side of the border, everybody spent money at the railroad station on drinks, coffee, tea and cigars, tipping freely, right and left. They acted as if they had just been freed from prison. Some of them shook hands and congratulated one another, and all thanked God to be rid of Russia and be free men.

On the way to Koenigsberg, I sat next to a Jewish man of about fifty years, who made a very good impression on me. He wore fine clothes and was stately and good looking, with a well combed beard which was most becoming, and his entire appearance and demeanor indicated intelligence and refinement.

I looked at him, and he looked at me, but I dared not speak to him. After about an hour, however, he asked me who I was and where I was going. I was delighted at the chance to converse with such a dignified-appearing person, and told him everything. The more we talked, the greater was the confidence I reposed in him, especially when he told me he knew my father. Little by little he became more friendly, even offering me some fruit which he had with him, and I felt I was lucky to have found such a fine gentleman to advise me what to do when I got to Koenigsberg.

I asked him what chance there was for me to find employment in that city, and to my consternation, he replied that there was practically none, since I was a stranger and did not know how to write or speak the German language. This was a great shock to me, and ended our conversation for the time being.

About a half hour later, he suddenly asked me how much money I had with me. I did not like the question, nor the harsh way in which it was put, and hesitated to reply.

"Oh," he said, "you have nothing at all. Well, if that is the case, I will give you a few marks to help you along for a while."

JACOB HORWICH, *Father of the Author*

And there he caught me, for I at once replied: "Oh, thank you very much, but I don't need your money. I can get along for a while with the money I have."

"Oh, well," he returned, "that's all right. And how much have you?"

"Over a hundred roubles," I told him. I had, in fact, two hundred roubles and twenty-five German marks, but I thought I would be cautious and not tell him the true amount.

Our conversation ceased again for a while. He fell asleep, or pretended to be sleeping, for quite a time. When he awoke, he spoke up again, and told me that he might have something for me to do; that I should come to see him two days after we reached Koenigsberg. He wrote down his name and address for me. His name I still remember. It was "Ishroel" Feldman, and I called him Reb Ishroel.

We arrived in Koenigsberg early in the morning, and Reb Ishroel bade me goodbye, giving me an address where he said I could get board and lodging very reasonably. I did not go to the place he recommended, however, for my father had given me the address of another person, to whom I went instead. I devoted two days to sight-seeing, and during that time incidentally obtained some information about Reb Ishroel. I met some people who knew him, and they told me he dealt in all kinds of sacks, especially old or used grain sacks. As to his honesty, however, I could discover nothing.

But Reb Ishroel was for the time being a secondary interest, as my entire attention was focused on the city and its people. The streets were clean, and the inhabitants well-dressed, "holiday-looking," and nice. The police were courteous, and no one interfered with me. I asked my way of men and women, and even of policemen, and received much better treatment than I was accustomed to. I was not afraid of being asked for a passport, or questioned as to my identity, as had been the case in Kovno.

I did not try to dodge men in uniform. On the contrary, I liked to look at them, with their fine uniforms and shining helmets. I thought they were lovely. I came across East-European Jews, with beards and long garments, selling grain and exchanging money — all busy and happy and free. It was a new and beautiful world to me. I fell in love with everything and everybody.

After having satisfied myself that I was safe here, and in no danger of being molested by anyone, I went to see Reb Ishroel. I found that he was boarding with a respectable-appearing family, who had lived in Koenigsberg for many years and were quite Germanized. I was told that Herr Feldman expected me and had left word for me to wait, and in about twenty minutes he came in and greeted me cordially.

He asked me to accompany him, and on the way explained that he had an order for a large number of grain sacks from a certain concern, and was now going to buy up the sacks from various grain dealers. He would like me, he said, to go with him, learn the business and get a start in life. Casually, he remarked that if I wanted to invest my hundred roubles (equivalent to two hundred marks in German money) with him in that deal, I would be entitled to a profit in proportion to my investment. I was silent, not knowing what to say at the moment, and he soon asked me what I thought of it. I told him that I would have to write to my father first, and get his advice.

"Oh, you foolish boy," he said laughingly, "this is Germany, not Poniemon. Business has to be done right now and not wait for weeks. It has to be done today or not at all."

"Very well," I answered, "let us go. At least, let us see the firm where you buy and see what it is."

In a few minutes, we entered an office, where he was greeted as Herr Feldman, and started to talk about buying and selling sacks. We all went down to the basement where the sacks were stored, and a deal was made for fifteen thousand sacks at twenty pfennigs (or about five cents) per sack, as they ran.

"All right," I said. "I will invest seventy-five roubles, as I want to keep some money for myself to live on."

"Fine," he said. "You are a smart and careful lad. You will make money with me."

When I took out the seventy-five roubles, he started to grab them, but I made a quick move and laid the money down on a desk at which a girl sat, and asked how many marks I could get for them. Reb Ishroel did not like this, and again remarked: "Remember, this is not Poniemon."

The girl informed me that a rouble was worth two marks and ten pfennigs. She took the money, and my partner kept on talking for a while, and then he said to me, "Let us go down to the basement again."

He explained that the sacks, which were lying in a big pile, had to be sorted and smoothed out, and laid straight in bundles of two hundred to a bundle; that we would have to hire a man to do this, which would cost about twenty marks, but if I thought I could do it, then I could make the twenty marks in addition to my share of the profits. I gladly accepted the offer, and on the same day, after I had written home about my good luck, I started to work with all the skill and energy I could muster. In three days I had everything in tiptop shape. Herr Feldman came in often to watch me work, and praised me to heaven.

When I was through with this arduous and dusty work, I bought myself a stylish second-hand suit, and again went out to see the sights. I looked around for a teacher who would instruct me in German, and found an Herr Schneider, who conducted a sort of private school for fifteen boys, charging each fifty pfennigs (about thirteen cents) a lesson.

Then, two days later, I went back to see my partner, but I did not find him in. I went again and again, but could not get hold of him. When I went to the place where the sacks had been stored, I found that they were all gone. I inquired at the office, but all they could tell me was that Herr Feldman had paid for the sacks and had taken them away. I tried to tell them that I had money invested in the deal, but they showed no interest and were not inclined to listen. It was a German firm, with each one attending strictly to his own business. I saw that they could help me very little, and turned to leave, but was called back by the girl who had taken my roubles. I told her my story, and she assured me that I would get every pfennig that was coming to me from Herr Feldman, if I could locate him.

I finally watched his house for six hours, one day, until he appeared. We had a long discussion, during which he gave me excuses and arguments, saying that I had not given him the money but had given it to the concern; that we were not partners on this one deal alone, but on other deals to come, and that I should write to my father for more money — that at the present time he could do nothing for me.

To my painful sorrow, I at last awoke to the realization that Reb Ishroel was a high-grade crook. I cried, begged and swore, but to no avail. I was ordered from the house.

This scoundrel robbed me not only of my money and pay for three days of hard work, but of my courage, my happiness and my confidence in the future. On my way home, the streets and the people did not look half so good as they had before. I slept hardly a wink that night, and the next morning I went again to the office where my seventy-five roubles had been taken.

I told the Fraulein about the conversation I had had with Herr Feldman, but of course, she could not help me very much. However, she advised me to go to the criminal court, and wrote a few lines to an uncle of hers who was an official there, asking him to listen to my story. An hour later, I was in the court and talking with Herr Knoegel, the clerk who received complaints of a criminal nature. When I mentioned the name, Feldman, he said he had heard that name before. He wrote down every word I said, and instructed me to come back in three days.

I then did something in which I probably did not use the best judgment. I went from the criminal court to the house where Reb Ishroel stayed, and told the people that my swindling partner would have to answer in the criminal court for cheating me out of my money. At first, they would not believe this, and wondered how it was possible for a young "greeny" like me, only a few days in the country, to find the criminal court and know what to do. However, I convinced them.

I learned later that two detectives visited the house on that day and the day after, but could not find the culprit. On the third day, when I went back to see Herr Knoegel, I was informed that Herr Feldman had left the city, but that if he ever showed up again, he would be arrested.

That was the end of my first business venture, and the end of my seventy-five roubles. To my knowledge, Reb Ishroel never showed up in Koenigsberg again.

For several days after this unfortunate experience, I walked around half dazed, discouraged and disappointed. It was not the loss of the money that troubled me so much as the fact that we had such scoundrels and hypocrites among our people, and that I was foolish enough to permit myself to be cheated out of half of my capital.

In my despair, I decided to go again to the concern where we had made the transaction. There the young lady who had previously taken care of me, introduced me to a man by the name of Lipper, the manager of the firm, and I was surprised to learn that he was Jewish. He listened patiently to my story, and seeing my dilemma, was very sympathetic and kindly.

When I had finished talking, he advised me, as a good friend would, not to worry too much, but to keep up my courage; and he repeated the old saying: "If you have lost money, you have lost nothing; but if you have lost courage, you have lost everything." He advised me emphatically to forget about my unpleasant experience, and promised to help me in the future if ever it would be possible for him to do so.

The fine treatment and the encouragement I received from Mr. Lipper did me a great deal of good, and in a few days I recovered from my disappointment and started to get busy again.

The first thing I decided upon was to move from the place where I lived. It was in the nature of a rooming house combined with a restaurant, which is called in German "garkiche," and was owned by a man named Lemkind. It was a small place, and was run by the husband, wife and daughter. They catered only to Jews and the food was all "kosher."

There were at the time only three guests besides myself — a young man and his parents. The mother had come to seek a cure from a Dr. Burro, then the most prominent physician in Germany and the surrounding countries, and her husband and son had accompanied her. They occupied the two rooms that were for rent, so I had to sleep on the floor. For this I paid, with meals, eight marks, or two dollars, a day.

I did not feel very comfortable there, first, because of the expense, which I knew I could not afford for very long; and second, because the young man who was there with his parents behaved in a very snobbish manner towards everyone, especially me, by reason of the fact that he was a student in a Russian High School. In those days, anyone who attended a Russian High School was considered quite an aristocrat, and looked down on everybody, and this young man, seeing a poor youngster like me around, delighted in making me feel miserable.

However, I had my revenge one day, when I overheard a conversation between him and his father about his studies. The latter insisted that his son should prepare his lessons on that day, but the young student wanted to put off his studying to the next day. I then spoke up, quoting a Russian writer, who had said: "Tomorrow, tomorrow, not today, is the talk of the lazy man."

The student felt insulted and was furious. Pearl, the daughter of the owner of the rooming house, happened to be present, and she burst into laughter at his discomfiture. She also bore him a grudge, because instead of calling her Miss Pearl, he called her Perke, which name was generally used in addressing servant girls.

When Pearl, who was always friendly to me, later asked me how long I intended to stay, I explained to her that my money would not last much longer, and I would, therefore, have to move. She advised me to wait a few days and told me that she would speak to a German woman who came to the house twice a week to clean, asking her to give me a room in her house for one mark (twenty-four cents) a day, including breakfast. Pearl suggested that I come to her father's place for my other meals, which would not cost me more than about two marks a day, and thus my living expenses would amount to only seventy-five cents a day instead of two dollars.

Pearl, who was a few years older than I, was a very attractive girl, with black eyes and long dark hair. I knew that she liked me and wanted to help me, so I took her advice, and a few days later moved to the house of the scrubwoman, whose name was Frau Zeikin.

I had an experience when I came to this new place which impressed me so strongly that I have told the story many, many times. Frau Zeikin had two rooms — one large room which served as kitchen, dining room and sitting room and also contained a bed, and another which served as a bedroom for herself and her daughter. She was a widow, her husband having been killed in the war.

I was to occupy the bed in the first room, the space where it stood being partitioned off from the rest of the room with a screen. When I moved in, it was rather late in the evening, and I found the bed made ready. It was nice and clean, and I slept very well.

About five o'clock in the morning, I heard someone removing my clothes from the chair near the bed. I was immediately concerned about the money in my trousers pocket, although I had most of my money under the pillow. I could not determine whether it was the mother or the daughter who was taking my clothes, but being by nature rather timid with strangers, especially women, I said nothing, and waited. A half hour passed, and I was in agony and began bewailing my fate — that I was being robbed right and left. Then the woman returned and put my clothes back on the chair. When she left, I grabbed for my trousers, and was relieved to find my money and other articles intact. Nothing had been taken, and I went back to bed, wondering what it was all about.

About an hour and a half later the woman brought my coffee to me in bed, as was the custom at that time in Germany, and told me that she had taken my clothes out to brush them. She had found two buttons were needed, and she had also shined my shoes. Well, that made me so happy, I forgot my troubles, and I remained with these people for several months.

In the meantime, I secured a job, through Mr. Lipper, with a concern by the name of Ernst Castell and Company. My work was to shovel grain, chiefly wheat, from one place to another. This was done in order to air the grain occasionally, so that it would not get spoiled, and so that the dust might be removed, which was effected by means of a draft from the open windows on each side of the warehouse. It was hard, dusty and unhealthful work.

Altogether, we were five men on that floor, and we had to protect our heads and faces from the dust by covering them with burlap sacks. When I later saw for the first time a picture of a man with a gas mask, I commented to a friend that that was the way I had looked when I was fourteen years old. Our hours were from seven o'clock in the morning until six in the evening, with one hour off for lunch.

After four months on this job, I was told one morning to take my shovel, which I had had to buy, and go outside, as a strike had been declared. At that time, I did not know what that meant. They called it a "streekie."

The strike affected the entire warehouse, which contained about five floors and employed about seventy-five men. All of these men stood outside for five hours, with their various implements on their shoulders, like soldiers, until the police came and ordered us either to go home or go to work; otherwise, we would be arrested. I took my shovel and left, giving up the job.

I was out of work for several weeks, and then went to see Mr. Lipper again. He got me another job, this time with the concern of Bear and Beumelberg. There my work was to carry sacks of grain from one floor to another, sometimes up and sometimes down. The place had five floors, and on each floor a man stood to help me lift the sacks on my shoulders, and to take them off. In a way, this work was not as bad as shoveling grain, being less dusty and dirty, but it was very hard. Some of the sacks weighed more than I did, and quite often my colleagues whose duty it was to lift the sacks onto my shoulders thought it great fun to drop them heavily, instead of putting them down carefully. For a while I did not say anything, and tried to laugh it off, but it soon became unbearable.

One forenoon, when they set a sack of rye on my shoulders with such force that I stumbled and nearly fell with the weight on me, I addressed the men in the following words, which I remember distinctly:

"Fellow workmen, if you think that I am not good enough to work with you, because of my looks or anything else, please tell me so, and I will say goodbye and leave you, and even treat you to beer for giving me an excuse to be away from such hard and terrible work. But if you don't have any objection to my working with you, then please treat me like one of yourselves, and remember that you are much older, stronger and healthier looking than I, and I cannot stand these jokes that you play on me any longer."

For fear that they might be offended, I added, "Of course, I know that you, as Germans and intelligent people, do not mean to hurt me, but you are going too far, so please don't do it."

This little talk, although given in broken German, made a distinct impression on these sturdy Dutchmen. One of them grasped my hand and said:

"My boy, you are right. I didn't like it, and I told them so. We are all going pretty soon to lunch. If you will spend the money on beer for staying instead of leaving us, we will all drink to your health."

Fifteen minutes later, when the noon whistle blew, we all went across the street to a saloon, which was called in Germany, "kneipe," and I spent a mark on beer. My fellow workers were thereafter my best friends for the three months I remained.

I had to leave because my legs started to swell and pained me so that I could hardly walk. A doctor told me that I must give up the work, as trudging up and down the stairs all day, with a heavy weight on my shoulders, was too hard for my constitution, and I might become crippled permanently if I continued.

My greatest ambition, next to making a living, was to learn the German language well. The lessons I had started to take from Herr Schneider did not last long. Our Herr Lehrer (which means "teacher"), was very fond of "schnapps," and the more he drank, the more he wanted. Of course, his excessive drinking did not harmonize very well with his teaching. When we boys refused to pay in advance, he would refuse to teach, and when we did pay in advance, he would immediately order a bottle of whiskey and would drink more than was good for him. When he was drunk, we could not stand him, and when he was sober, he could not stand us. There were, therefore, always arguments and trouble.

After taking about six lessons, I had to give it up, and started to study by myself. I bought a beginner's book, and studied evenings and on Saturdays and Sundays. Little by little, I acquired enough of the German language to be able to speak and read fairly well, and also write a little, and was on the way of becoming quite "Germanized."

During this period, I had for the first time the exciting experience of attending a theater. I went to see Schiller's "Rauber", given in German, and was overjoyed when I found I could understand most of the play.

In order to obtain an easier job than I had had before, I realized it would be better to mingle more with Jewish business men than with German working men. I accordingly moved from Frau Zeikin's home, and secured room and board with a Jewish family by the name of Lipstadt.

Mr. Samuel Lipstadt recommended me to several Jewish business houses, and I finally found employment with a firm called Wolf Semolzan. My work here was to copy letters, carry around small grain samples to various concerns, keep the office clean and run all kinds of errands. This was comparatively easy. My salary was nine marks a week, which was little more than the amount I had to pay Mr. Lipstadt for room and board, but as I still had some savings, I managed fairly well.

My employer, however, was a terrible man to get along with. He was an old man, with a long beard, dirty, very cranky and sickly, and it seemed that the only relief he could find was to vent his anger on those around him. He never uttered a good word, and he was always looking for faults. I stuck it out for a whole winter, but when one day he threw an ink bottle at me, spilling all the ink on my face, I felt I had had enough. I overturned the writing desk where I had been copying letters, breaking some glasses that were standing there, and went away. A few days later, I received my week's pay of nine marks, with the suggestion that I come back, but I refused to return.

After looking for weeks for another job without success, however, I went back to see the old man, but it was then too late, as he had employed someone else. I was now in a serious plight. My money was gone, and I could not write to my parents. Mrs. Lipstadt gave me notice that she would not keep me much longer unless I paid my board, and I walked around the streets without money and without food for days.

I remember one morning passing by a bakery store. I went inside and told the proprietor that I would do any kind of work for a loaf of bread. He called me into the yard and showed me a pile of wood, which he wanted carried into the cellar, and for this he would give me half a loaf. I agreed, but asked him to give me part of the bread at once. He refused. But after I had worked for half an hour, a woman came out with some bread and coffee. This was the first food I had had in a day and a half.

When I finished the task, I was given my half loaf of bread, as promised, and twenty pfennigs in cash besides. I always remember this episode as one of the most wretched experiences of my youth. Besides the acute pangs of hunger which I suffered, I felt humiliated that I should have been reduced to the state where I had to beg for bread.

Two days afterward, I obtained a position with a concern by the name of E. Rosenberg and Son. My remuneration was six marks a week, plus breakfast and a place to sleep. My duties were similar to those with Mr. Semolzan. Mr. Lipstadt was employed by this same firm, with whom I remained for almost two years.

There I learned to know grain, learning about the quality, the price, the places where the grain came from and where it was going, and so forth.

Both Mr. Rosenberg and his son, who comprised the firm, were very fine people. The father, a Lithuanian who came from the vicinity of my native town, belonged to the class known as the Russian intelligentsia, and knew Hebrew, Russian and German. Though he observed all of the laws pertaining to the Jewish religion, he was not a fanatic. He represented a great many grain dealers in Russia, who would ship the grain to him to sell, on a commission basis, and was known as one of the foremost men in this line. He had an office staff of six people.

Mr. Rosenberg was a man of very few words, and did not speak unless it was absolutely necessary. After I had been with him a week, it happened one morning that the cabman who brought him to the office was not satisfied with the tip he had received. He stood on the sidewalk in front of the office, yelling that Mr. Rosenberg was a "cheap Jew," and using other strong, offensive language. Mr. Rosenberg was sitting at his desk, reading the mail, which I opened for him, and when I called his attention to the insulting language of the cabman, he said to me without turning his head, "Throw him out."

"But," I replied, "he is outside already."

"Well, then," Mr. Rosenberg said, "call him into the office, and then throw him out."

Whenever he had anything to say to me, he would never turn his head towards me, but would simply give me instructions while looking at the work on his desk.

* * *

Since Hitler has come into power, Germany has come to be known as the most terrible country in the world. Most people, especially Jews, shudder when it is mentioned. But the Germany I knew as a youth can no more be compared with the Germany of today than one can compare a bright, fresh, sunny day in May with a cold, dark, stormy night in December.

Germany then was a country of law and order and justice. The Jews who lived there enjoyed in every respect equal rights with the Germans. The only complaint that some Jews made with regard to equality was that the Junkers objected to Jewish officers in the army, and very few Jews could attain the rank of an officer.

During the years of my stay, the country was very prosperous, and Koenigsberg was a thriving city. It was the receiving station, or clearing center, for all grains coming from the eastern countries, especially Russia. The grain dealers in Russia would buy up various grains, such as wheat, rye, oats, and so forth, and ship them to Koenigsberg, where they had representatives, called "commissioners." These men would sell the grain on the Board of Trade to German concerns, in Germany, who in turn would sell it to countries in many parts of the world. The "commissioners," as a rule, were Jews, coming from Russia, Poland, Galicia and Roumania.

One could see daily, on the streets of this German city, Koenigsberg, Jews of all types, some with long beards and long garments, and with funny looking caps, doing business on the Board of Trade with large German concerns. They walked the streets as freely and proudly and confidently as any German.

In the five years I was there, I saw only one incident where there was trouble between Jew and German. A Jew named Benjamin Slack, a little fellow with a very long beard, was accosted by a big German ruffian while walking along the street. The man stopped the Jew, lifted his beard at the end, and said to him: "You little Jew, you have to be careful not to step on your beard, for you are likely to tear your head off."

I considered it a joke and laughed, but not that little fellow. He grabbed hold of the big, husky German and started to yell, "Police!" and did not let go until a policeman came. In great anger, Benjamin waved his arms in the air and said, "This ruffian insulted me and attacked me." But the German laughed and said to the policeman, "I just told him in fun to pack his long beard up, as he is likely to get entangled and be hurt."

At that moment, another German, apparently a responsible business man, came over from across the street, and told the policeman that the Jew was telling the truth. The result was, as I later found out, that this attack cost the German five days in prison. He had the privilege of paying this penalty on five Sundays; that is, every Sunday for five weeks he had to come and stay in prison for the day, so as not to lose any of his working days.

This little incident is one of many I could relate to show how very different life in Germany was for Jews then from what it is now.

* * *

When I had been with the Rosenberg concern for a few months, my employer informed me that from now on I would have additional duties to perform. Every morning I would have to be on the freight tracks, where the cars of grain came in, inspect the grain, take samples of it, and supervise the receiving of these grains by the buyer. My salary was doubled.

At the beginning, I found it a rather difficult job. The tracks were always filled with carloads of incoming grain, and on some days there was not room enough on the tracks for the hundreds of cars that had come in during the night. In a short time, however, I became accustomed to the work, and did it well.

I often had as many as thirty cars to take care of at a time, and it came to be that the more cars there were, the better I liked it. I mingled with the representatives of the buyers and sellers of the grain, and learned to understand the various kinds and qualities. I hoped that some day I would be "somebody" in the grain business.

What I liked most was the hiring of help, whom we employed to sew up or fasten the sacks of grain that looked weak. Certain places in the various districts of the city were assigned for workers to assemble, and there they could be found by anyone who needed them. The workers would sit on long benches, waiting to sell their labor to anyone who wanted to hire them. About fifty or seventy-five men and women would assemble every morning on the vacant square of my district. When someone came to the square to engage help, all present would stand in line, so that he could make his choice. I was in the habit of selecting young men or women, because they could work better and faster than the older ones; but soon had occasion to change my policy.

One morning, while I was on my way to hire seven or eight workers, I was stopped about a block from the square by an elderly, motherly looking woman. She asked me very politely if she was intruding by speaking to me. I answered, "Of course not, Mutterchen (which means "dear little mother"). I shall be glad to listen to anything you have to say."

She thanked me profusely, and grabbed hold of my hand, addressing me as "my dear young merchant."

"I notice," she said, "you are always hiring boys and girls to work for you, and I cannot blame you for that. But we older people also have to live. Just think of your own mother, and how miserable she would be, if she were poor and in need of food for her two school children and herself, and if she had to sit around here for hours, wishing for somebody to give her some work. Moreover," she added, "I will prove to you that I can work just as well and just as fast as the young people do."

She looked straight at me with tearful eyes, and begged, "Please hire me for today, and you will see how well I can work."

The poor woman nearly broke my heart. I couldn't answer her. I just nodded my head, patted her on the shoulders, and pointed to the square, indicating that she should wait for me there. From then on, I always selected more of the older people than the young ones. Frau Egbert, the woman who had spoken to me, I hired every day until I left the employ of Mr. Rosenberg.

I remember writing to my father at this time, describing the scene with great pride and informing him of the progress I had made in a short time, boasting that I was now a real business man, hiring help. I took youthful pleasure in relating how the German men and women would wait anxiously for me to give them work.

Among the people with whom I became acquainted during my first few months in this work was a man by the name of Leib Shaaf, who had come from Riga to Koenigsberg many years before. He had started out as an expressman, and his work was chiefly to take the waste grain that had spilled out of the sacks onto the floors of the freight cars to the warehouses of the owners, who would sell this grain at a low price to farmers for cattle food.

After a while, he caught on to the business, and instead of working as an expressman, merely hauling the waste grain, he started to buy it up himself, and in that way eventually became a grain dealer.

Mr. Shaaf could not read or write, and he often asked me to read and write Jewish letters for him, and to write addresses. Thus we became well acquainted. Gradually it dawned on me that his was a good and easy type of business. It did not require much money to operate, and it was just the sort of thing I ought to be able to handle.

I carried this idea in my mind for many months, and finally confided it to a young friend of mine, by the name of Max Perlman, who boarded at the same place I did. He was engaged in work similar to mine, for another concern, and made fourteen marks a week, of which he saved about one-half.

We spoke about the project very often, and finally agreed on the following plan: He was to continue working, while I would give up my job. With the money that he had saved, which comprised several hundred marks, and an equal amount which I was to borrow from my employer, Mr. Rosenberg, I was to start the business, buying up the waste grain, cleaning it and getting it in proper shape, and then selling it. The plan worked very well.

I rented a little place, and the first purchase I made was from Mr. Rosenberg, making a nice profit on the deal. Then I went to see my old friend, Mr. Lipper, and bought grain sacks from him, and on this I also made a profit. It was enough to more than make up for the loss I had previously suffered through Herr Feldman.

Within a year, Perlman gave up his job, and we formed the partnership of Horwich and Perlman. However, because he had invested the first two hundred marks, he insisted that his name come first, and the firm name was accordingly changed to Perlman and Horwich. At that time I was about seventeen years old, and Perlman was about the same age.

Young Perlman was a type of person who couldn't be found among thousands. He had a capacity for working from five in the morning until twelve o'clock at night. He had a marvelous mind, knew the grain business from A to Z, and was as honest as the day is long. Yet he was one of the queerest and most stubborn and selfish individuals with whom I have ever come in contact. When he once made up his mind, yes or no, no one could budge him. Before I got used to him, and found out how to get along with him, we had almost continual quarrels about one thing or another.

Although very young, he was a religious fanatic. He would not let me go to our place of business on Saturday, and in order to be sure I didn't, he would nail up the door and barricade it, so that I could not get in. For a time we lived together in one room and ate many of our meals together, but I finally had to give this up, because of his fanaticism.

Our business increased and succeeded to such an extent that we began to buy grain on the Board of Trade in carload lots, and were considered as grain dealers. We could have been very successful in this venture, as we were now fairly well established and understood the business, and our firm was registered with the smaller class of grain dealers. But my partner proved impossible to get along with.

He insisted on having his way in every respect. He wanted to do the buying, the selling, the handling of the money, the bookkeeping, the correspondence, and everything else. Of course, this led to arguments and friction. The selling of the grain was the easiest part of our business. The most difficult part was buying the grain, and buying it at the right price. I proposed many times that we should divide the two branches, one doing the buying and the other the selling, but he refused to do this. Moreover, he insisted that if I bought anything without his approval, he would consider himself a partner to the deal only if there was a profit; that if my buying should result in losses, I would have to stand it all. While I resented this attitude greatly, it did not affect me very much, as I kept on buying and managed to show a profit on every purchase.

Then an unusual incident occurred. A ship carrying a load of loose wheat developed a bad leak on the way to Koenigsberg, and after pulling up to the river dock on the side of a grain warehouse, it sank, and was found one morning submerged. The whole cargo was covered with water and soaked through, and a good part of it was puffed up and almost worthless.

I found out about it, and got busy. I obtained samples of the wheat, which I dried in the same bakery shop where I had once earned half a loaf of bread by carrying a big pile of wood into the basement. After drying the grain slowly off and on for eighteen hours, I found that it could be used for feeding hogs; in fact, it would make excellent fodder.

The whole shipment could be purchased for an extremely low price, but the main expense involved would be in unloading and drying it. In those days, there were no artificial drying machines, and after making all kinds of inquiries and investigations, I found that the wheat would have to be dried outdoors, in the sun.

The shipment contained about twenty-five thousand bushels. According to my calculations, if everything went right, there would be a profit of nearly thirty-five thousand marks, which in those days was quite a fortune.

My partner, as usual, told me to do as I pleased. He did not want to attempt it, and would not risk any of his money in the venture. But if I went through with it myself and invested whatever money I had in the business, and succeeded, he would claim some part of the profit. Of course, this was unfair and unreasonable, but he would not argue and could not be convinced. It was a question of take it or leave it.

I could not handle the deal myself under any circumstances. Even if we used all the money we had together in the business, I would not be able to swing it. I, therefore, went to see my friend, Mr. Shaaf, and he recommended a man who would put up the necessary money. However, I would also have to invest most of what I had in the partnership with Perlman. I agreed to do this, the necessary arrangements were made, and we went to work.

I rented about half a mile of vacant land, a short ride from the city. This was during the month of July. We unloaded the wheat and spread it on canvasses all over the ground, and engaged ten men to keep turning the grain continually. Every day, and almost every hour of the day, we watched the sky. The hot July sun kept drying the wheat better and better. We figured that in two or three days more we would be able to move the wheat into a warehouse, and our fortune would be made. Everything looked rosy, and I began to consider myself a rich young man.

But, alas! Something terrible happened. Just two days before the drying process would have been completed, a rainstorm poured down with such force that the wheat was completely soaked and spoiled beyond recovery, and I was ruined. We realized too late our mistake in not preparing complete coverings for such an emergency.

Perlman sympathized with my loss, but he felt that since I had taken out almost my entire investment from the business, he could not consider me a partner any longer, and there I was, helpless and in despair. My anguish was even greater than that I had experienced when I first came to Koenigsberg and had been swindled out of half of my capital by Herr Feldman.

It happened that great military maneuvers involving over a hundred thousand soldiers were then taking place at Koenigsberg, in the fields around the city, and the population was in a holiday mood. The old Kaiser, Wilhelm II, Crown Prince Frederick, Chancellor Bismarck, Field Marshal Von Moltke, and most of the nobility and aristocracy of Germany had come to the city for the event. The excitement and thrill of beholding the "cream" of the German people and mingling with the crowd like any German, had such a cheering effect on me that it helped me forget half my troubles. For many days I went to the fields where the maneuvers were being performed, and saw the parades, demonstrations and glitter of the uniforms, the cannon and all the other military equipment. I was happy in the thought that I would have something of importance to write home about, especially to my brother, Harris, who knew well the history of Germany, and was informed about its leaders.

My ex-partner, Max Perlman, had a brother, Robert, who was in the retail grocery business, which was there called the "material" business, and he suggested that I go into partnership with him with the money I had left. His reason for this invitation was that he could not attend to the business himself, and had to have someone to help him. I accepted the proposition, and we went into partnership.

However, I saw from the beginning that it could not last, primarily because I was accustomed to doing business on a large scale, dealing with the big business houses and being looked upon as a "kaufman," or merchant. I had people working for me. I felt proud when I saw a line of applicants standing in front of our place every morning, inquiring whether we had any work for them. People who knew me greeted me as "Herr Kaufman." But now I was just a nobody, working in a small store, selling articles for fifty pfennigs or a mark at a time. Besides, business was slow. I decided to give it up, and in separating from the second Perlman, I lost some more of what I had left after the incident of the shipload of spoiled wheat.

I realized I could blame no one but myself; but I concluded that I would not be able to work myself up again in Koenigsberg, and left for a smaller place by the name of Tilsit, not far from the border of Russia. I knew a young man there by the name of Werbel, who was born and raised in Tilsit, and was quite a nice person. He worked for a concern that handled several different items, including grain.

I told him that I still had a little money, and that if he had some, we could go into partnership in the same line of business he was in. He agreed to this, and two weeks later we had a little warehouse, with an office, and began to do business. We handled hides, skin, horse hair, metals, scrap iron and some grain. These articles would be brought in for sale by the peasants around Tilsit two or three times a week. We did not make a great deal of money, but we made a very good living and managed to save. If we had had a larger capital, we could have done very well.

Whether business was good or bad, my spirits were high. I lived in the home of a shoemaker, where I had a large room with two windows, which was kept spic and span. Every morning the daughter of the shoemaker, an intelligent and very good looking girl, brought me fresh flowers and fine coffee.

* * *

While I was busy planning how to obtain more money to increase our business, I was startled by an article in the morning paper which served to alter the course of my life. Although I still could not speak or write German well, I could read and understand it almost perfectly, and read the Koenigsberg Daily every morning at breakfast, thus keeping informed as to what was going on.

One morning I read that the Government at Berlin had issued an order concerning the influx of foreigners, especially Russians and Poles, into Germany. The order stated that only certified and recognized business men would be allowed to remain in the country. All others, who could not qualify as such, would have to leave. Young men from eighteen to twenty-five years of age, however, could remain, provided they became German subjects and entered the service of the army at once.

I wrote to my ex-partner, asking him whether it would be possible for me to join him again, or if not, to make arrangements for some kind of combination between Koenigsberg and Tilsit, so that he and I would not be affected by the new law. (Tilsit is only about two hours' ride from Koenigsberg.) He answered me promptly, stating tersely that, as far as he was concerned, he was safe, and he was not interested in forming any kind of partnership at that time.

I had meanwhile engaged a lawyer to inquire about my status, and while he was investigating the matter, I received a letter from my cousin, Wolf Horwich, from New York. Enclosed was a steamship ticket from Tilsit to New York for his brother, Yankel, who lived in a little village not far from Tilsit. I knew about this Yankel, but did not have his address. I made inquiries, and two days later, having learned where he lived, I visited him and showed him the letter and the ticket for his passage to New York.

Yankel was married and had two children, and was living very comfortably, and so found it difficult to make up his mind about going. He told me he would want to think it over for a few weeks before deciding whether it would be advisable for him to give up his place at home with his family, where he made a fair living, to go to this far off America, which was an altogether different world, strange and unknown.

Except for the fantastic tales of wealth to be acquired there, very little was actually known about America. The exaggerated stories we heard were based only upon the fact that all those who emigrated to New York or America (these being synonymous to the Europeans) were sending money to their relatives.

Three weeks later I received word from Yankel that he might go in a year or two, but not at this time. In the meantime, I was informed by my lawyer that he doubted whether I would be able to remain in Germany very much longer.

It was then that I started to think about America, and began to read whatever I could find about that country, so that I might be better informed, should I decide to try my fortune there.

One of the names of importance I came across in my reading was that of President Garfield, who had just been assassinated. At that time I did not know the meaning of the word, "President," or realize its significance — that he was the chief executive of the country, comparable to the Kaiser in Germany, nor did I know that he was elected by the people. I sought information about the functions of the President and Vice-President, but was unable to learn very much about these things until I came to New York.

CHAPTER III

"THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY"

Although now barely eighteen years old, I was faced with the serious problem of deciding my future course, myself. Should I stay in Germany, which I loved with all my heart and soul, and where I could somehow make a living and be respected, or venture out into a world unknown to me? After thinking about it day and night for weeks, hesitant and uncertain, I finally made up my mind to use my cousin's ticket and go to New York.

My reasoning, in deciding upon this important step, was something like this: Since Germany, although comparatively a tiny country, provided so pleasant and comfortable a life for its inhabitants, how much nicer must it be in the United States, which was so very much larger and therefore undoubtedly presented greater opportunities. The questions of liberty, equality and democracy did not enter into my decision, for in Germany everybody seemed to be contented and happy — the people were nice, the streets and houses clean and attractive, and there was no fear of police or of Cossacks. All this was in decided contrast to the conditions in Russia, where we were afraid of the police and of the Cossacks and had to have passports all the time — where most of the people were poor and miserable, and the streets muddy and dirty.

I further reasoned that if when I arrived in the United States, I was disappointed and things weren't as I had expected, I could return to Germany, as I would have enough money left to enable me to do so, and I could then serve in the German army for the required eighteen months and become a full fledged German citizen. Thus I would lose nothing by going, and the experience I would gain in making the trip would be well worth the expense involved.

When I told my partner, Hirsh Werbel, of my decision to withdraw from the business and leave for America, he was dumbfounded. He pleaded with me, he argued, he cried — he used every means possible to convince me that in a short time we would build up a big business, and the firm of Horwich and Werbel would be known in Koenigsberg as well as it was in Tilsit.

But I would not give in, for I knew that my restless spirit would not be satisfied until I went to New York, so that I could decide for myself whether I belonged in America or in Germany. Ten days later, with hundreds of other emigrants, I was on my way to Hamburg.

There were special emigrant trains which left Eydkuhnen, on the Russian frontier, and passed through Koenigsberg, on the way to Hamburg, where we were to embark on ships taking us to England. From there we were to sail for New York.

I boarded the train at Koenigsberg, our tickets allowing us passage from Koenigsberg to New York. We were huddled into eight or ten cars, traveling fourth class. The coaches were merely huge boxes, with no seats and only a few windows for ventilation. They closely resembled our cattle cars here.

My fellow travelers were indeed a sorry-looking lot. Most of them possessed very little money, just barely enough for necessary expenses. All, without exception, were raggedly attired and unkempt. Sitting or sleeping on their piles of crude, dirty baggage, they were indeed a miserable, poverty-stricken, bedraggled-looking group of human beings. My appearance was novel to them, and they regarded me with awe, for I was clean, well dressed, could speak German, and looked, according to their standards, "aristocratish." I sensed their respect and admiration. We soon became acquainted, and each one confided his troubles to me, describing the town he was leaving and telling about his relatives in the United States.

It was not long before I was called upon to act as their leader, and in this capacity found myself confronted with the problems of a certain young couple traveling with us. They had been married two days before they left, and depended upon two tickets which were supposedly awaiting them at Koenigsberg. When they found only one, they became greatly frightened, and I was asked to decide which one of them should use the ticket. I advised them to telegraph their relatives in America, but they would not hear of that. In the first place, they could not spare the money, and secondly, they were afraid it might implicate the young husband, as he was leaving in order to evade military service. They were very worried and persistent, and I tried another suggestion. I advised that since a young man could always take care of himself, it would be safer for the young man to make the trip first. Then, with the aid of their relatives in New York, they could somehow manage to bring the wife over. This advice they accepted.

When we reached Hamburg, we were met by representatives of an English steamship company, which had several agencies in Russia and Poland, and one in Hamburg. Many of the emigrants were bewildered and unable to make themselves understood, so I had to do the talking for them.

We were taken to a large house, where we were shown an array of tin dishes. On the wall was a large sign, instructing us as to the kind of utensils we would need on the voyage, such as drinking cups, knives, forks and plates, and the agent advised us to purchase all these at a specified price. We were divided into groups, and my group would not act without my consent. I was not quick to take the agent's advice, and told him we would wait until the morning to make our purchases. The next day I went to look at the dishes again and found that our waiting was rewarded, for the prices were a little cheaper. I knew it would be easier for my friends to meet these lower prices. The agent was highly indignant and claimed that I and my friends were taking advantage of him; but I insisted, and he very reluctantly agreed to let us have the supplies at the reduced prices.

We stayed in Hamburg for two days, and I decided to stroll about and look the city over by myself. However, that proved harder than I thought, for I was constantly trailed by a flock of my newly-made traveling friends, and I had to be very tactful in evading them. But I did get around, and learned a good deal about that great shipping port, which was extremely interesting and informative, although the transportation and navigation in those early "boom" days were nothing in comparison with our present-day methods of commerce and travel.

On the third day, we were given orders to embark on an old rusty-looking little steamer, which would take us across the English Channel to Liverpool. We started at about eleven o'clock in the morning.

That short trip was one of my most dreadful experiences. Within two hours after sailing, everyone became violently ill. The small boat see-sawed up and down, the strong waves beating against its sides, and one by one the passengers keeled over and had to be carried away. It became so rough that it was necessary to stretch long ropes across the top deck to serve as hand-lines for the sailors to grip. By nine o'clock that evening we had all collapsed.

I can readily say, from that experience, that seasickness is one of the worst illnesses that can befall a human being. Every fiber in one's body is in agony. The physical and mental suffering is intense, and one is indifferent to anything and everything, hoping even that the boat will sink, just to get rid of that feeling.

It was pitiful to see the poor people sprawled out in anguish, and heartbreaking to hear many of them pray for the boat to sink, to relieve their torment, although it was humorous to hear them curse Columbus for discovering America, and curse their relatives for ever sending for them.

The sailors were very sympathetic, making frequent rounds to see how we were getting along, trying to pacify us and assuring us that it would soon end.

"Oh, yes," an old man near me yelled, "an end in a watery grave. No one will even know what became of us."

At last the ordeal was over. We all survived, and landed in Liverpool at ten o'clock the next morning. There we had to wait eight days for a large steamer, named the "Egypt," to take us across the Atlantic Ocean on the last lap of the trip to America.

Liverpool seemed a strange and unpleasant place to me. I did not know a word of English, and being unable to speak to the people, my only diversion was to wander through the streets, and compare them with those of German cities. I must say the comparison was very unfavorable. The houses looked black, old and neglected, and the streets were narrow and filthy, like those in Kovno, Russia.

One morning, when another young man and I were out for a walk, we encountered two men engaged in a fist fight. This was to me a very surprising spectacle, for in Germany to hit someone with the fist was considered as bad an offense as striking with a dangerous weapon. In fights I had witnessed in Germany, people would slap or kick each other, attempt to overthrow the other, or pull hair or tear their opponent's clothes, but did not use their fists. This fight, therefore, appeared very serious to me. Here were two men, with bleeding faces, punching each other as hard as they could; and I thought I ought to do something to stop them. I proceeded to try to separate them; but a woman nearby very quickly pulled me away, admonishing me in a language I could not understand. I later learned that she had warned that if I interfered, both men would beat me up. Finally the fighting stopped, and that same woman brought out a pail of water and a towel. After washing the blood from their faces, the men shook hands, and each went his way, with swollen eyes and a bruised face. It was all very strange to me, and I was puzzled as to whether each had accomplished what he had set out to do.

Proceeding down the street, we met a man who looked Jewish, and we stopped him, my companion asking him for directions to the principal streets of the city where there might be something to see. He gave us the names of the streets and instructed us how to get there. As he seemed very friendly, I told him about the fight we had just witnessed, and that I could not understand the meaning of it — that here were two men beating each other so hard that the blood was running down their faces, yet they did not show resentment nor enmity, but shook hands and parted like friends.

To this our adviser replied, "Ah, it must have been a bloodletting affair," and went on to explain at length that there are some people who have more blood than is good for them; that instead of going to a doctor and paying a fee for being relieved of the surplus blood, they look around for someone who also needs a blood-letting. They then start punching each other until they think they have accomplished their purpose. As we listened intently, the man suddenly laughed loudly and disappeared, and we realized we had been made fun of.

The time finally came to embark on the large steamer for America. Knowing that food on the ship would not be plentiful, I inquired of some English Jews whom I had met as to the kind of provisions to take along, and on their advice I bought some sausage, cheese and soldier's bread.

The memory of the twenty-two hour trip across the Channel was very vivid and fresh, and we anticipated with horror an ocean voyage of three or four weeks. In fact, so terrified were we that about ten or twelve of the group changed their minds, and refused to venture forth for fear they would not live to reach New York.

It took us over three weeks to cross, but fortunately the weather was pleasant, and we had smooth sailing. In fact, it was rather enjoyable. However, the food was bad, and our sleeping quarters in the steerage, with its accompanying odors, is something I have never forgotten.

Some of the passengers slept in stalls, each of which contained a straw mattress, a pillow and a blanket; but as there were not enough stalls for all, some had to sleep in hammocks, which were tied between two posts. I was fortunate enough to be placed at the end, in one of the stalls. It was pitiful to see the others, however, especially some of the old Jews, crawl into their "beds" and try to make themselves comfortable.

Our trip was not without its share of excitement. Traveling with us was a group of young Irishmen. I had never heard the word "Irish" before, and had no idea what sort of people they might be; but I was informed that they were fun-loving, quick to play pranks, and always ready to fight. I found this to be so when they decided to have fun with the old Jews who occupied the hammocks.

One night, about eleven o'clock, after we had retired and all was quiet, I noticed several of these young men creep up cautiously, while two others acted as watchmen. It was obvious that they were up to some mischief. I was curious as to what their plans were, and soon saw one of them draw out a knife and set about to cut the rope holding up one of the hammocks. That prank did not appeal to me, as the hammock hung about five feet from the ground, which meant that the occupant was in for a serious fall. Before I realized it, I impulsively cried out in German:

"Stop that, you ruffians! Do you want to kill that man?"

That, of course, created a furor. I didn't understand what they were saying to me, but it was plain that I had stirred their anger. They shouted and shook their fists at me threateningly, making it necessary for the overseer of the emigrants to intercede and calm them.

But the matter did not end there. It seems they were now determined to "get me," and the next night I saw these same fellows approaching me stealthily, carrying large mugs of water. Their intention was obvious. Luckily my bottle of drinking water stood nearby, and I emptied the water into my tin cup and waited. Just as they approached my stall, I crouched down in the corner, so that the water they threw missed me, passing over me. I then deliberately poured my cup of water on the face of the sleeping occupant of the next stall, so that it appeared it was the water thrown by the intruders. The poor fellow awoke yelling, and was convinced it was they who had drenched him. The fight that ensued brought out the ship's officers, who decided it would be advisable to station three men to guard against trouble during the remainder of the trip.

At last we landed at Castle Garden, New York. I at once donned the new suit and hat I had purchased in Germany, and at the suggestion of one of the interpreters, I checked my baggage, which consisted of a suitcase and a sack stuffed to capacity. Then, very confidently, I took my cane, as was fashionable in Germany, and proceeded to go in search of my cousin, Itze Note Horwitz, who lived on Forsythe Street in the densely populated east side of New York City, near the Bowery. No one met me at the boat, but I had my cousin's address, written down in English, and an interpreter directed me how to get there.

It was then that I learned the humiliating appellation of "greenhorn." While I strolled along, looking for my cousin's place, a boy about fourteen or fifteen years of age espied me as an immigrant and decided it would be great sport to throw stones. I was struck several times before I discovered who the culprit was, and started to chase him, when something unexpected happened. I ran right into a man with whom I had worked in Koenigsberg. His name was Nossen Rosenstein, and he had come to America about two years previously.

We were happy to see each other, but he was unable to understand why I had been running, and when I told him what had happened, he took my arm quickly and said very anxiously:

"For Heaven's sake — you are a greenhorn. Get away as fast as you can, for they are likely to kill you."

I was glad to get away, and more than glad to have somebody else with me.

I finally reached my cousin's home on Forsythe Street, and its wretched and neglected appearance almost made me sick. A Talmudic student and one of the leaders of a synagogue, Itze Note knew nothing about business or earning a livelihood, but spent his time in study. His wife, a very clever business woman, was the breadwinner. She peddled dry goods, selling on the instalment plan, and was away all day. My cousin, therefore, was the housekeeper, and a poor one at that. They had a girl and two boys, and they all lived in a small flat on the third floor, consisting of three rooms, besides the kitchen.

I tried to hide my feeling of disappointment, and tried also to remember that I ought to respect my cousin, as I was still a mere boy, and a guest, and he an older man. I greeted him warmly, but the surroundings were so obnoxious to me that I could not refrain from commenting about them. He explained that it was difficult to manage with his wife away all day, to which I responded that if he would hire a woman to do the cleaning, I would pay for it. This was a bad beginning, and I now again heard the name, "greenhorn" and was told that he didn't expect a "greenhorn" to come all the way from Germany to criticize his housekeeping and cleanliness.

I went out to get my baggage, and in the meantime looked over the neighborhood. It was all very disillusioning. The noise and the heat were unbearable, and then and there a homesickness for Koenigsberg came over me. I was very lonely, and the nights that followed were sleepless ones for me. I grieved for my home in Koenigsberg, and dreamed of my room in Tilsit. How light and airy, clean and attractive it was! I thought longingly of the flowers that had been brought to my room every morning. I thought of the respect accorded me there, and contrasted it all with my cousin's home and surroundings. In the one place, I had been treated as a prince, while here I was a "greenhorn"— an untouchable, so to speak, and regarded as silly, and ignorant in the manners and ways of life. Many nights I lay with tears in my eyes, and felt it impossible to go on thus for more than a few months.

I would have returned to Germany at once, but I had spent more than I had expected to. It had been necessary for me to buy new clothes from head to foot, since my European clothes marked me as a "greenhorn," partly because of their style, and partly because of the odor of salt water that still clung to them. Though I could have bought a ticket back to Germany, it would not have left me enough capital to start out in business again when I got there. My only thought now was to earn some money and save enough to enable me to return as quickly as possible.

I found my only source of consolation in my cousin, Wolf, the youngest brother of Itze Note. He was outstanding in comparison with most of the other people with whom I came in contact, being an honest, straightforward, hard-working, sensible, good-hearted and lovable youngster. I am happy to record that he is still here, and is still in business with his sons in New York. His five older brothers in this country have all gone to their eternal rest.

For two weeks I did nothing but wander around the streets, returning in the evening, when my cousin's wife, Leah, would be home and have supper prepared. Both she and my cousin were generous with their advice as to my future. They told me to forget about the prospect of finding a position, intimating that I would never be able to hold one. My only salvation, they informed me, would be to learn the technique of peddling, buying, selling, and so forth.

Of course, none of this appealed to me. I could not visualize myself going from house to house, trying to deal with people in a language I couldn't speak, realizing how I would be received by those who knew I was a "greenhorn."

I was often deeply hurt when those people whom I thought my friends considered me inferior and undesirable company, simply because of that designation. I was constantly reminded of it, and was made to feel very uncomfortable.

One incident I remember very plainly. I was out walking and suddenly met a boyhood chum by the name of David, whose father had been my Hebrew teacher at home, in Lithuania. I was greatly elated at meeting such an old friend, but my heart sank with disappointment when he refused to recognize me. I asked him repeatedly if he knew me, reminding him that I had been a pupil in his father's cheder, and trying to refresh his memory by recalling the times I had helped him with his lessons. But he shook his head and insisted on answering in English that he did not know me. This not only hurt my pride, but incensed me greatly, and seizing him by the coat, I cried:

"You miserable little snob, don't you remember when I stole bread and cake and pickles from my mother, and brought them to you because you were starving? Don't you remember the time when you cried that you were hungry, and I brought you to our house, and induced my mother to feed you?"

I warned him that there would come a day when I would no longer be a "greenhorn," and would belittle him as he had humiliated and belittled me. When I walked away, he overtook me and made an effort to explain, but I refused to listen to him.

I was very despondent because of all these experiences. Yet there was one redeeming feature about the situation — and that was the atmosphere of freedom and liberty that prevailed, as well as the generosity of the people with money. It was that spirit of freedom (true, I then called it "wild freedom"), which helped to give me hope and courage to endure all humiliation.

As an example — one day, while I was standing on a corner in front of a saloon, a young man came up to me and spoke to me in English. When he found I did not know the language, he immediately spoke in Yiddish, and taking me by the arm, led me into the saloon and treated me to a glass of beer and lunch, which consisted of a hard-boiled egg and bread. When I asked his reason for doing this, he replied:

"This is America, my boy. When I meet you again, you can have more drinks."

Not only was he generous in treating me, but he also offered me fifty cents, which I refused, assuring him that I was no beggar.

One evening my cousin, Wolf, and I were talking about my future, and I sought his advice. His opinion was that it would be a good idea to peddle handkerchiefs, and he advised that all I had to do was to get myself a box, take a place on one of the Bowery corners, and proceed to sell the handkerchiefs, at five cents apiece.

That, I felt, was beneath my dignity. Wasn't I a business man in Germany, buying and selling grain, employing people, and called "Herr Kaufman?" In fact, I was actually what would today be termed an "industrialist." How, then, I argued, could I, "Herr Kaufman," stand on a corner and sell handkerchiefs for five cents apiece?

But Cousin Wolf induced me to try it, and I bought my merchandise, and one evening came home with a profit of eighty-five cents. So happy was I at this, that my whole outlook on life changed, and I could hardly wait until the next day to repeat the procedure. This went on for a week, and my business began to prosper. I was already making plans to build stands where I could sell other wares in addition to handkerchiefs, and expand my business to the point where I would have different branches.

But suddenly, one day, a policeman approached me on my corner and told me to "move on." I tried another place, but the policeman saw me, and again told me to move. After the third move, the policeman warned me that the fourth time would be the last, as I would then be arrested. So that was the end of my handkerchief business and my plans for expansion.

Casting about for some other opportunity, I decided to read the advertisements. To my recollection, there were no Jewish newspapers in those days, but a German paper, called the "New York Stadt Zeitung," afforded me the required source of information. I read in that paper of a business opportunity, wherein a certain man was seeking a partner who had fifty dollars in cash. The inducement was a daily profit of between five and ten dollars. This was overwhelming news, and I excitedly showed the item to my cousin and his wife. They ridiculed me, saying it was a "humbug"— that I would lose every cent, and reiterated that a "greenhorn" should not consider such foolishness. I argued that it was unbelievable for anyone to use the newspapers, a public instrument circulated widely, with fraudulent intentions; but it was of no use — they could not be convinced.

I decided to take the risk, and without further mention of the matter to my cousin, went to see my prospective partner. I found a young, dignified appearing man in charge of a small one-room office. He spoke German, and explained that he needed someone in the office to receive and attend to any people who might come in. He explained that the nature of his business was to find work for German immigrants, charging them a percentage of their first month's salary, in addition to a down payment of five dollars. All

I had to do was to get the names and addresses of the applicants and obtain five dollars in cash from each one.

I decided to try it, gave the man ten dollars in cash, and promised to pay forty dollars more the following week. That seemed agreeable to him, and he gave me a receipt and asked me to return two days later. I came back at the specified time, but to my chagrin, found a different person there, who knew nothing about the man I had interviewed nor the receipt he had given me. I then realized that I was still as gullible as when I had first come to Germany, and had permitted myself to be taken advantage of.

* * *

I sought further advice from my townspeople who had been here for several years, and they thought it would be a good idea for me to go to another city, preferably Chicago. New York, they said, was known as the "first America," because it was the first city people came to, and most of them naturally remained there, in consequence of which the city was overcrowded. They believed I would find conditions much more to my liking in Chicago, the "second America," as it was a younger city and still growing, and in need of more people.

I took their advice, and five days later, after paying my cousin for the ticket he had furnished from Germany to New York, as well as other expenses, I bought a ticket to Chicago. After three days of travel on a very uncomfortable, hot and dusty train, I arrived one morning about ten o'clock at the Polk Street Station in Chicago.

Arriving at the station, I inquired of various people whether they understood German, and one man asked me what I wanted. I told him I was a stranger, just arrived from New York, and would like to be directed to a Jewish neighborhood. He pointed to the east and said: "If you go that way, you will find some Jews, but not many." Then, pointing to the west, he said: "If you go across the bridge, you will find a great many of them."

Inquiring as to where the better class of Jews resided, I was given to understand that on Canal Street I would find all kinds of Jews, but mostly poor ones.

I checked my baggage at the station, crossed the bridge and reached Canal Street. Here I came upon a rather unkempt person, hatless, collarless, and coatless, standing in front of a store, smoking a big cigar. I tried to overlook his appearance, and told him what I wanted. In a very rude and facetious manner he said in Yiddish, without removing the cigar:

"You go straight ahead, and you will find all the Jacobs, Chayims and Abrahams you want."

I decided to seek a more desirable individual for information, and I soon came upon a nice, motherly-looking Jewish woman talking to a little girl. I apologized for intruding and repeated my story. The woman was very friendly, and when she heard that I came from Germany, she told me that her brother had come from there about six weeks previously, and she was sure he and his family would be glad to have me stay with them. Her name, as I learned later, was Mrs. Davis, and her brother's name was Itzchok, or Isaac, Goldstein.

The Goldstein family, consisting of the husband, wife and two children, a boy and a girl, lived on Liberty Street, and they received me very well. The girl's name was Anna, and the boy's name, Louie, and both of them are still here. During the few years I lived with the family, another son was born, named David. To my sorrow, he passed away about five years ago.

Mr. Goldstein was a unique type of person. He was a young man of average height, rather stocky, and had a blond beard, blond hair and blue eyes and regular features, so that he looked more like a Nordic than a Jew. He had had no schooling, but possessed good common sense, and was straight-thinking and honest. We would sit for hours talking about Germany. He was interested in me and my history, as well as in my family and relatives, and living at his home was my first pleasant experience in this country.

In the short time Mr. Goldstein had been in Chicago, he had established a peddling business, carrying a pack on his back, and was making a fair living. He was concerned about me and my future, and every day his advice was that I buy some goods and take up peddling.

I disliked the idea very much. It seemed so humiliating. I felt that since I still had about a hundred dollars in cash, I would prefer to find a job and see how I could manage.

I acquainted myself with some of the west side streets, and learned of a concern on Canal Street by the name of Swartz & Nathan, dealers in scrap iron. They operated a large yard, where the scrap iron was received, sorted according to grades and kinds, and sold to steel mills. I was told I had a good chance of getting a job there.

Mr. Swartz, the senior partner, was a tall, strong, dark-complexioned man, with a very serious face. He studied me for a while during our interview, and then told me to report for work at seven o'clock the next morning. I very meekly asked him about the kind of work I was expected to do, and what the salary would be, and he replied abruptly:

"You will do whatever you are told to do, and your wages will be a dollar and twenty cents a day."

I was there promptly at seven o'clock the next morning. My co-workers were big, husky Irishmen and Poles, and we were assigned to unload rusty iron. This type of work was entirely new to me, and my hands began to give me a great deal of trouble, so that it was necessary for me to use gloves. However, I worked very diligently for about three weeks. I did not mind the hard work, nor even my aching hands, but I could not bear the treatment I received from the other workers. Knowing I was a "greenhorn," unable to speak English, they pushed me around, and on one occasion, while we were unloading a wagon of steel rails, they deliberately dropped a heavy piece of rail right beside me. Had I not jumped away in time, I would have been badly hurt.

The men burst into laughter, and I was amazed at their grim sense of humor. I immediately spoke to Mr. Swartz about the incident, telling him that I was not afraid of the hard work or the blistered hands, but did fear the acts of the other men and felt it was dangerous working with them.

"Well," was Mr. Swartz's response, "I cannot engage other men for you. That is how they are, and if you don't like it, you can look for another place." I left at once.

Five or six years after I left Mr. Swartz's employ, it happened, by a strange coincidence, that I was called upon to act as one of three arbitrators in a case involving damages against his firm. A man had been killed while in his employ, and the widow presented a claim, asking a large sum.

The other two arbitrators were a Mr. Gershon and Mr. Joseph Hirsch, of Schultz & Hirsch Co. I was delegated to act for the widow, while Mr. Gershon was to represent Mr. Swartz and Mr. Hirsch was to act as impartial mediator. Although I had the opportunity, in this matter, to make things difficult for Mr. Swartz, I forgot my grudge against him and proposed a reasonable settlement of $8,000.00 on behalf of the widow, which everybody agreed was fair to both parties, and which sum was duly paid.

For a week after I left Mr. Swartz's firm I doctored my hands, which were in a very bad condition. When they were better, Mr. Goldstein again mentioned to me the peddling business, and much as I disliked the idea, I agreed to try it. He took me to a wholesale dry goods store on Canal Street, which was owned and ostensibly conducted by a Mr. Marks Simon, but was actually operated chiefly by his wife. Mr. Simon was a modest man, known in the neighborhood as a nice, pious, respectable Jewish storekeeper.

Mr. Goldstein selected my merchandise for me. My stock, amounting to forty dollars, consisted of towels, table cloths, napkins, underwear and various notions, such as buttons, needles, shoelaces, thimbles, handkerchiefs and laces. I had an awful time trying to mark the prices, and memorizing the name, cost and selling price of each article.

Two days later I found myself doing what I had put off all this time. There I was out on the street with a pack on my back and a basket in front, going wherever chance might take me. I was mortified and self-conscious, and felt that all eyes were on me. Within an hour I made three attempts to turn back. The thought of having been reduced to peddling with a pack on my back distressed me. I was ashamed of myself.

For three hours, from nine to twelve o'clock, I went from house to house, but no one would see me. At last I came to the home of a Swedish woman, who opened the door and looked over my stock. She purchased goods to the amount of two dollars, on which I made a profit of thirty-five cents. This was the first success I experienced since giving up the handkerchief business on the Bowery in New York. As time went on and I gathered more courage, I managed to earn between one and two dollars a day, and some days as much as five or six dollars.

The work was not terribly hard, but our chief trouble came from the boys on the street and from the street-car drivers and conductors. Those boys, who had nothing else to do but molest and harass and steal, had not the intelligence to comprehend that we human caravans were simply trying to make an honest, decent living. They saw only the incongruous appearance that we made, with our large packs and baskets, and we were good prey for them. They were always there to bombard us with stones, and it made little or no difference to them that they sometimes caused serious injury and in many cases, death.

The street-car conductors, to add to our difficulties, often refused us passage, and frequently, after we had boarded their cars, forced us off again.

Every evening after supper, we used to tell each other the kind of goods we had sold that day, how much money we took in, and how much profit we had made, and particularly the trouble we had encountered from loafers and hoodlums.

Mr. Goldstein, a kind soul and very optimistic, never complained of the struggle he had to make a living. On the other hand, no matter what happened to him, he described the occurrence in detail, with enthusiasm and optimism, in such a manner as to give his listeners the impression that he was happy because his torturer had cheated himself in not doing worse than he did. He carried his merchandise in a large box which he had made especially for the purpose of protection. It had large straps through which he could slide his arms and lift the box high over his head, thus guarding himself against the stones hurled from the rear.

One afternoon about five o'clock, after a day's work, I jumped on a street-car with my packs of merchandise, to go home. The conductor was in the front, and I got on at the rear, so that he would not see me. I settled down, putting my baggage in two places, to make it as inconspicuous as possible. When the conductor came from the front to collect my fare, he noticed the basket on one side and my bundle on the other, and remarked in a loud voice:

"You had better take your bundles and go back to Jerusalem." He spoke with a very strong Irish accent, and most of the people in the car looked at me and laughed.

For a moment I was embarrassed and felt confused, but while he was making change, I gathered courage, and spoke up, as follows:

"In the first place, Mr. Conductor, you should not make fun of Jerusalem, for if you know anything at all, you ought to know that Jesus was born near there, and the Christian religion had its beginning in Jerusalem. Secondly, neither I nor my parents nor my grandparents were born there or lived there. The fact that Jews lived in Jerusalem two thousand years ago is no reason why I should go there because of your say-so.

"But you are an Irishman. Anyone can tell it by your accent. You were born there, and no doubt you are not very long from Ireland, as is apparent from your English. Why, then, don't you go back to Ireland? That would be more natural and more logical."

Of course, this is not the exact language I used, but it conveys the gist of what I said.

While I was trying to make myself understood, in broken English, everybody laughed; but when I had finished, an elderly man came over to me and shook my hand, and said:

"Well spoken, young man. You are right. He deserved to be reproved."

I felt like a general who had won a great victory.

Late one afternoon, Mr. Goldstein came home from the day's work with his cheek and eye all swollen. I was very anxious to know what had happened, but he only smiled and said, "Wait" — he would tell everything as soon as he had washed up and we were ready for supper.

This is the story he told us: While walking on Randolph Street, he had noticed a nice-looking boy gazing at a sign and apparently paying no attention to him. Before passing him, however, Mr. Goldstein studied the boy covertly, to make sure it was safe to do so, and when he felt certain the boy would not harm him, he walked by very nonchalantly, pretending not to see him. He had taken but a few steps when he felt a sharp, stinging blow above his eye, and noticed a "nice, pointy little stone" rolling on the ground. He picked it up and brought it home to show us.

"The blow dazed me," he told us, "and I thought I was shot. I stood there, leaning against the wall, so helpless that the fellow could have taken from me anything he wanted. But," he added smilingly, "that fool ran away."

I have never forgotten how placidly and pleasantly he related the incident, showing no vindictiveness or anger — overjoyed, in fact, that the boy did not rob him of everything he had. I, however, was very bitter and incensed over the matter. I argued with him that he should have attempted to seize the boy and punish him — but he had the usual answer: "Well, we are Jews, and it could have been a lot worse. We might just as well thank God, and make the best of it."

Liberty Street, where we lived, was one of the many unpaved short streets between Canal and Halsted Streets, and was narrow, muddy and dirty. The wooden sidewalks were uneven, and at some places they were elevated, with steps on each side, leading to the houses.

Every second evening and on Sunday afternoon, we would go over to Canal Street, for the purpose of replenishing our stock. The neighborhood swarmed with these vicious, uncontrolled boys from whom we suffered so much, and it was almost impossible to pass through without harm. Mr. Goldstein hit upon a mode of procedure to protect himself — he would either wait for some woman to pass by, or he would ask Mrs. Heine, a German neighbor across the street, to accompany him, as these scoundrels seemed to have at least a little respect for a woman. When I went along, we would have the woman walk between us.

The fruit and vegetable and junk dealers, who used horses and wagons, experienced less difficulty than we did, as they could whip up their horses and gallop away when danger threatened. Those who peddled on foot, however, were never safe from attack, and so bad was the situation that a good many of the Jews of that neighborhood stayed only long enough to save sufficient money to pay for their steamship tickets, and returned to Europe.

One day, after I had been peddling for several months, fate took me to the house of a friendly Irishwoman. In the course of our conversation, I complained, in the best English I could command, of my bitter struggle to make a living, and of the troubles I had because of the wild, mischievous boys on the streets. She told me about the Milwaukee Avenue district, informing me that there were a good many well-to-do families of various nationalities in that locality, and that, furthermore, the boys were less menacing. She stated that she had lived there for several years, and knew the neighborhood quite well, and she suggested that I try it. I took her advice and set aside Tuesdays and Fridays for working on Milwaukee Avenue.

After several weeks of visiting the latter section, I made a contact which proved to be a very lucky one for me. I happened to call at the home of a Mrs. Klee, whose husband was a dealer in horses, supplying them to street car companies. Mr. and Mrs. Klee were German Jews, who had been in America for many years. The very first time I called, she bought nearly ten dollars' worth of goods, treated me to lunch, and gave me an order for the following week. Not only was she a good customer, but she obtained other customers for me, and with Mrs. Klee's help my business increased, so that within a year it was no longer necessary for me to carry a big pack around all the time. Instead, I would see my customers on certain days of the week, and take their orders. Then I would go to Marshall Field & Company's wholesale house, which at that time, if I am not mistaken, was located on the corner of Market and Randolph Streets, purchase the necessary goods all at one time, and deliver them.

Mrs. Klee truly was a godsend, and proved an important factor in my career. It was she who recommended me to a Swedish family that lived some distance southwest of Milwaukee Avenue, and this family also secured many customers for me. So much faith did I have in the Swedish family and in the Klee family that on occasions when I had a cumbersome pack with me, and had to return to the neighborhood on my next day's business, I would leave my pack with one or the other. Or if it happened that I had more money with me than I felt it safe to carry, I would leave the money with my Swedish friends, or with Mrs. Klee. This was a necessary precaution, as we had had several night visitors at Mr. Goldstein's home on Liberty Street, who had robbed us of what little money was in the house at the time.

The friendliness of the Swedish family was especially manifested in a certain incident. Calling there one Friday afternoon, the lady of the house informed me that she was too busy to talk business then, and asked me to return on Sunday afternoon, when her husband and two daughters would be at home. I was pleased with the suggestion, and left my big bundle with her.

When I called the following Sunday afternoon, the husband, in the presence of the entire family, asked me to show him my stock. He selected a pair of socks, and asked for four more pair, but I found I had only two. He then picked up a tablecloth, and said he would like two of them — but I had only the one. Finally, he saw a suit of underwear, and asked for two more of the same kind, but again I had only the one. I knew that I should have had all of the articles he wanted, and that they were in my pack when I left it with his wife the previous Friday. I felt nervous and confused, but tried not to show it, and told him that he should take what I had, and I would bring the rest on my next trip. He looked at me rather strangely and said:

"I am surprised at you. You do not know how much stock you have. You're a fine business man. You don't even know what your stock consists of. How can you get on like that?"

"Well," I answered slowly, "of course, I know." I took out my notebook and showed him that I should have had so many of this article and so many of the other.

"Then," he said, looking me straight in the eye, "why the dickens didn't you say anything?"

"In the first place," I replied, "I did not know who took the things, and even if I suspected you or any member of the family, I would not have permitted myself to accuse you of stealing anything."

In a very surprised manner, he asked: "Would you have gone away without saying a word to me about it?"

I told him that I certainly would have gone away without letting him know that I entertained the slightest suspicion. This made a fine impression on him, and he shook hands with me and said:

"We just wanted to have some fun by trying you out. Some of the family thought that you would holler 'murder' and run for the police — but I see now the kind of person you are."

He went on to say that if our religious beliefs were not so far apart, he would have liked to see me marry one of his daughters.

I continued in the peddling business for three years. Friends often suggested that I open a store, believing I would be successful in such a venture, but the idea did not appeal to me.

When my business was established to the point where I could relax somewhat, I proposed to Mr. Goldstein that we buy a horse and wagon in partnership and peddle our merchandise together. I suggested that we spend a half day seeing his customers and the other half seeing mine, and explained that while one of us was visiting the customers, the other could watch the wagon and merchandise. We tried it, and it worked out very well. We were able to carry more goods, and less effort was required, and most important of all, we were much safer from attack by hoodlums. We also were much happier, as we had disliked being in the "peddler class," and now considered ourselves "merchants."

Gradually I overcame the early hardships of earning a livelihood. I had saved close to a thousand dollars, and with things looking better for me, I began to forget Germany. However, had I had that much money when I first came here, with conditions as I found them, I would certainly have returned to Germany immediately.

Just as a test, I decided to write to my ex-partner, Max Perlman, in Koenigsberg, to find out whether he would accept me as a partner again. I told him that I had $1,000.00 (which was equivalent to more than 4,000 marks), and would like to return to Germany if he would accept my proposition. I really did not expect a favorable reply, but I was curious as to his reaction.

I received a prompt response, a four-page letter, written in German, in which he set forth various explanations and excuses, and a final absolute "No." His letter satisfied me, and I decided definitely to remain here.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY CHICAGO

Sixty years ago, the city extended on the west only as far as Ogden Avenue. The "aristocratic" street of the West Side was Ashland Boulevard, from Polk Street north, and it was there that Carter H. Harrison, then mayor of Chicago, resided.

At that time, according to Meites' "History of the Jews of Chicago," there were about ten thousand Jews in the city. These were divided into definite groups. The Russian and Polish Jews were crowded into the district bounded by Canal, Halsted, Polk and 14th Streets, being especially concentrated on Canal Street, where many were established in business. As previously described, the great majority of this group of Jews earned their livelihood by peddling dry goods and notions, which they carried around on foot, or junk, vegetables and fruit, which were peddled with horse and wagon. Every morning one could see a small army of men, with packs on their shoulders, going off in various directions, and a whole array of junk and vegetable peddlers driving through the streets, crying out their wares at the tops of their voices.

The noise they made was considered a nuisance by many of the citizens, and complaints were brought to the attention of the City Council. However, nothing was done about it. The peddlers had their own complaints, regarding their being attacked on the streets, and Mayor Harrison, who was a fine, highly intelligent and liberal man, listened to all parties. He tried to appease everyone by assuring them all, in his friendly and quiet manner, that these things were merely incidental to the growth of the city, and that in time everything would be regulated to everybody's satisfaction, if they would have patience. This good man was assassinated on October 29, 1893, while serving his fifth term as Mayor of Chicago.

The German Jews, who were in the minority, resided chiefly on Michigan Avenue, between 12th Street and 35th Street, although some German Jews, together with Jews from Roumania, Galicia and Bohemia, lived in the Milwaukee Avenue district.

The relationship between the Russian and Polish Jews and the German Jews was anything but amicable. The latter group, with their background of German culture, speaking the German language, engaged in more worldly and sophisticated business enterprises, and practicing Reformed Judaism, were looked upon as Germans rather than as Jews. The Russian and Polish Jews maintained that the reformed religious ideas of the German Jews made them really "substitute" or "second-hand" Jews, and that their Rabbis were almost like Christian ministers. Some even asserted that they regarded the Christian ministers more highly than the Reformed Rabbis, since the former were believers and preached their religion truthfully and faithfully, while the latter tried to deny their Judaism, so as to ingratiate themselves with the non-Jews.

The Russian and Polish Jews, having come from countries where oppression took the place of education, were considered by the German Jews and people in general to be unlearned and "half-civilized." Very few of them could read or write English, and since there was as yet no Yiddish paper here, they received their information from their children of school age, who could understand a little of what was in the newspapers. The majority knew only what little Hebrew they had learned in their "cheders," and for the most part were religious fanatics. Most of them had beards and wore ill-fitting garments, spoke only Yiddish, and made their living as peddlers or petty traders. They were accordingly looked upon as undesirable immigrants by many.

The attitude of the German Jews towards their Russian and Polish brothers was one of superiority and unpleasant pity. They tolerated them only because they were Jews, and one would often hear the German Jews bewailing their fate — that they, Americanized business men, had to be classed in the same category with the poor, ignorant, ragged Jewish peddlers on the other side of the river, on Canal Street. Although I myself was one of these "Jewish peddlers", I could hardly blame them.

The German Jews then had, as far as I can remember, three houses of worship, namely: Sinai Temple, Kehilath Anshe Maariv and Zion Congregation. Sinai Temple had two Rabbis, one of whom was Rabbi Bernhard Felsenthal. He was very old and seldom officiated, but occasionally he would deliver a sermon in the German language. Of the old German school, he was quite a scholar, and was familiar with Jewish literature as well as literature in general. He was considered "only partly Reformed," and the more intelligent Orthodox Jews liked him for his sincerity, piety and mild and kind disposition.

The other Rabbi of Sinai Temple was Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, then a young man. He was a graduate of an American and a German university, and had received his rabbinical degree from a German seminary. Dr. Hirsch was an outstanding reformer, a great scholar and a brilliant orator and linguist. In later years, he acquired the reputation of being one of the three foremost orators in the country, the other two being Burke Cochran and Chauncey Depew.

The Russian Jews had a synagogue on Canal Street and one on Clark Street, near Polk. The one on Canal Street, if I remember rightly, did not then as yet have a Rabbi.

The synagogue on Clark Street was a very small place. However, the leaders of the community considered it proper to call it "Beth Hamedrash Hagadol"—"the great Synagogue." Its Rabbi, Eleazer Anixter, was orthodox in the fullest meaning of the word. Indeed, he could have been a Rabbi two hundred years ago in Poland. This world meant nothing to him. During his whole life, he prepared himself for the world to come by praying, studying the Talmud and the hundreds of its commentaries, preaching and settling disputes, and bewailing the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

I had my first experience in the Jewish religious community of Chicago about seven weeks after my arrival. It was during the High Holidays, and for the New Year services I went to the Reformed Temple of which Dr. Emil G. Hirsch was the Rabbi, as I understood he was to preach in the German language. When I arrived, I found that all the seats were taken, but an usher managed to place me in a corner near the platform. This would have been a very advantageous position, but Dr. Hirsch spoke in English, and very erudite English at that, instead of in German, so I understood little of what he said.

The next week, for the Yom Kippur services, I decided to try the synagogue on Canal Street. However, I was informed I could not enter unless I paid the one dollar admission charge. This was too high for me, and I offered to pay fifty cents, but was refused. I tried to convince the trustee at the door that that was all I could afford, and urged him to let me in. He finally called a policeman to force me out.

I then went to De Koven Street, where services were being held in a rented hall. Here I also offered my fifty cents, but to my pleased surprise, the doorman stated that since I was a newcomer, they would not charge me any admission fee. He did not use the term "greenhorn" in addressing me as he was a "greenhorn" himself.

A few years later, this congregation laid a cornerstone for a synagogue on Judd Street, and called for contributions of from ten cents up. I contributed five dollars, without comment, and went away. As I left, I heard people exclaiming: "There goes the fellow who gave five dollars!"

The synagogue on Canal Street, from which I had been ejected, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary about twelve years ago, and I was invited to be one of the speakers. Our present Governor Henry Horner, who was then a judge, was also there to speak.

In my opening remarks, I told the congregation that instead of making a speech, I would relate an experience I had with a certain synagogue seven weeks after I came, as a "greenhorn," to Chicago. I described in detail the argument I had with one of the trustees over the admission fee — how hard I tried to persuade him to let me in for fifty cents, and how he called a policeman and had me forced out on the sidewalk. When I finished, I waited a few seconds, and then said:

"Do you know which synagogue that was? If you cannot guess, I will tell you. This, your synagogue, was the one where I had such a fine reception when I first came to Chicago."

This created quite a sensation. Although the administration had changed many times, there were still a few former members of the Board of Directors present, and they were, I am afraid, very much embarrassed. However, I had my satisfaction.

As I remember, the early leaders among the Russian Jews of the West Side were the following: Mr. Max Swartz, my former employer in the scrap iron business; Mr. Marks Nathan, for whom was named the Marks Nathan Orphan Home; the two brothers Berkson and a Mr. Jacob Cohen, who manufactured men's and ladies' hosiery; the two brothers, Mendel and Max Simon, who were in the wholesale dry goods business, supplying dry goods and notions to the peddlers; and also Abram A. Bernstein, Harris Cohen, H. M. Barnett, Dr. A. P. Kadison, J. Kanter and Abram Lieberman.

The leading Jews of the Reformed group whom I knew were Charles Kosminsky, Nelson Morris, Adolph Loeb, Adolf Kraus and Harry Greenebaum.

* * *

Occasionally I would hear of political meetings, to which everybody was invited, or of meetings in the "Schul." I tried to attend as many of these gatherings as I could, in an effort to master the English language. I learned, at the political meetings, that the Irish and the Germans exerted a great influence in political life. The former dominated the police force, and the latter, the saloon business — the "beer saloons," as they were then called. The politicians and candidates depended to a great extent on the saloon element for votes. Here I also learned the meaning of and the difference between the Republican and Democratic parties. The Republican Party had the greater appeal for me, and I have since been an adherent of that party.

One day, on the occasion of a national holiday, I attended a meeting held in the Canal Street synagogue. The principal speaker was a young lawyer by the name of Shabad, recently graduated, and as he was, I believe, the only Russian Jewish lawyer with an "American" education in the city at that time, he was very highly regarded by the community of "greenhorns."

His talk was given in English, and I listened attentively to catch every word. He spoke about the Civil War, and marvelled at the greatness of our country, contrasting this land of freedom with the lands of tyrannical oppression from which the members of the audience had escaped. He admonished them to show their patriotism and to thank God every day, especially on the Sabbath day, for being free citizens and for having the privilege of living here.

I observed that most of the audience could not understand him, and were therefore annoyed. I, however, understood most of what he said; but I was not moved by his rhetoric, being painfully aware of the attacks made upon us by the street ruffians as we tried to earn our bread, and the general humiliation we Jews suffered.

When he finished, and the president announced that evening services would follow in fifteen minutes, some irresistible force made me call out that I would like to say a few words. This created quite a stir, and the eyes of all were turned upon me. I ascended the platform, and said in Germanized Yiddish:

"If I am granted permission, and you will have patience, you will learn what I want to say."

My speaking Yiddish interested the audience, and many asked that I be permitted to go on. I thereupon turned to the young lawyer, and said to him:

"My friend, you should know that these people were unable to understand what you told them. If you cannot speak in Yiddish, then don't speak at all. However, I know that you can speak in Yiddish, and I think you should have given your speech in that language, and should not have told the people anything which they could not understand or believe."

I then addressed myself to the audience, and explained his talk to them, after which I added the following:

"This man advises us that we should thank God every day, especially on Saturdays and holidays, for the freedom and liberty that we are enjoying in this great and blessed country. That might apply to those who are really enjoying the blessings of freedom and equality, but do we Jews here on the West Side — do you peddlers — enjoy that liberty?"

There was a roar of approval. The president did not like this, and exclaimed:

"It is impertinent for a greenhorn boy to talk like that!"

However, the people were eager to hear more, and shouted, "Go on! Go on!" So I continued. I painted the picture of our plight — how hard it was for each of us to make a living — that we had nothing wrong in mind — that all we wanted was to earn our bread in an honest, respectable manner. I worked myself up to such a pitch, that I actually shouted.

"How are we treated?" I cried. "Like dogs! On every corner we are attacked, and we are not safe anywhere. We are not safe even in front of this synagogue! When we walk along the streets, we must peer cautiously, to left and right, like hunted animals, for fear of being attacked by the ruffians who live on crime. Can we call that freedom — or slavery?"

The cry, "Slavery!" came from many parts of the synagogue.

The cheering and applause lasted for many minutes, and when the audience calmed down, I continued:

"If we cannot get the authorities to protect us, then we should form some kind of organized protection ourselves. We should engage young men, and pay them to watch out for these hoodlums, and when they find a Jew being molested, they should give them a beating they will remember for the rest of their lives."

I then turned to the president, and said: "If you want to do anything for the Jews here, and for the congregation, call a special meeting and organize such a group of watchers, and I am sure that those who torture us will no longer keep us in constant fear. Only then will things change for the better."

This entire incident upset me very much, and I was nervous and excited, especially when many people came rushing up to shake my hand and praise me, some of them telling me their experiences.

The president stated that he would have a committee see Dr. Hirsch, who in turn would see the Mayor about the situation and they would undoubtedly find some way to remedy it. Although he had opposed my speaking at first, the president now admitted that in the last few months, three peddlers had been so badly beaten that one was crippled and another had died.

The result was that a committee did go to see the Mayor, and he promised that he would instruct the police captains to assign more men to the Jewish neighborhood. He also assured them that he would write to the school teachers, asking them to warn the children not to molest anybody on the street. I don't know whether that helped a great deal, but I do remember that the newspapers printed articles regarding the situation, and the

Jews were encouraged when they saw public officials and authorities take a hand in the matter.

As I have stated before, Mayor Harrison was loved by the people of Chicago, and especially by the Jews. He spoke German to the Jews, and because they could understand him, and because, with his gray beard he resembled a Rabbi, they felt very close to him.

I remember one occasion, when a meeting was held in the synagogue in honor of the one hundredth anniversary of the well known Jewish philanthropist, benefactor and statesman, Moses Montefiore, and Mayor Harrison was invited to speak. As he entered the synagogue, the people went wild, and clamored to shake his hand. The president introduced him, saying that he knew our Honorable Mayor understood German — therefore he must understand Yiddish. I am sorry to say the introduction was not a great success, as neither the audience, nor the Mayor, nor the president himself, knew what he was talking about.

The Mayor stepped up to the platform, wearing his hat.

"I know it is a religious custom to wear a hat in a synagogue," he remarked. "But I came here to speak to you about a great man — not only great as a Jew, but great as a lover of humanity and philanthropy — and when I mention his name, I must take off my hat. That man is your Moses Montefiore." With that he removed his hat and remained bareheaded for a moment.

Watching the people there that night, I could see how appreciative and solicitous they were of him. I realized that they were willing to do almost anything for him, and I, too, felt the same way.

However, in the midst of all this enthusiasm, I overheard someone remark in Yiddish:

"Alas! How unfortunate is our situation, and how pitiful is our self-respect, that because an official addresses us in kind words, we are so overwhelmed with gratitude that we could fall on our knees and kiss his feet!"

* * *

About that time, a new Rabbi, by the name of A. G. Lesser, came to Chicago, having been invited by his countrymen here to come and act as the spiritual leader of a synagogue that had just been organized. Although he had been Rabbi of a little synagogue in a small town in Lithuania, he was well known as a scholar and as a pious and intelligent man. Rather young, and of a striking appearance, he had fine features, wore a becoming beard, and looked more like an American professor than an Orthodox Rabbi.

His arrival created a stir among those Jews from the "old country" who had become somewhat Americanized. They tendered him a reception, and announced that he would be inducted on a certain day in a certain hall on Clark Street, at which time he would deliver his first sermon.

In the "old country" that I knew, it was not the function of the Rabbi to deliver sermons or make speeches. His duties were primarily to act as judge between disputing parties, perform marriages, give advice and decide religious questions relating to dietary laws, and so forth; and also to officiate in divorce cases, which latter occurred very, very seldom. The rest of his time, he was expected to devote to the study of the Talmud and Jewish literature in general.

The lecturing was done by learned Jews, like my Uncle Ishaya, who used to travel from town to town and speak to the people on the Sabbath and the various holidays, and sometimes even on week days. These men were known as "maggidim," which means "speakers" or "lecturers." They were divided into two categories. One group would deliver lectures only on the Bible or the Talmud and the commentaries pertaining thereto. The other group were something like what we know here as evangelists. They would admonish the people to be pious, honest and charitable and to have the utmost faith in God and His laws, and in the greatness of Israel. They would also dwell on the great calamity that befell the Jews when Palestine and Jerusalem were conquered by the Romans, and on the past and present sufferings of our people.

I remember those Saturday afternoons in the winter time, at dusk, when it was not as yet permitted to light the candles, but was still so dark that one could hardly recognize another. The little Lithuanian synagogue, with its crude, uneven benches, old and dilapidated, was crowded with miserable human beings, broken in body and spirit, hoping against hope to hear some words of encouragement or some good news from the guest "maggid."

In a sing-song voice, the "maggid" would lament the misfortunes of the Jews, and describe how they were persecuted, oppressed and mistreated by their enemies, and how they lived in misery and poverty. The whole assemblage would cry and cry, as long as they had tears left. Some would cry themselves to sleep, and one could hear them sighing and moaning in their slumber.

Before he finished, however, the speaker would adopt a different tone. He would clear his throat, and dry his tears, or pretend to do so, with a large red handkerchief which he always held in his hand. His mourning ceased, and his sing-song voice and sorrowful demeanor gave way to a more confident attitude and consoling tone. He would assure the people that as long as they had faith in God and obeyed His commands, as is written in the holy Torah, there was no reason to fear. He would add that this life was just a stepping-stone to the real world to come, and that the suffering we experienced here was trifling compared with the great reward that awaited us in the next world.

The reaction of the people to the "maggid's" exhortation was such that most of them were willing and ready to depart from this miserable world at once, in order to go to the world of God and

His angels, where they could live in glory and happiness for all time to come.

In Germany I had discovered a religious life that was entirely different. There I found a magnificent, inviting-looking Temple, which had soft, comfortable seats and a clean, wholesome air. The Rabbi, appearing on the platform in dignified robes, his "tallis" woven with silver threads, would deliver a sermon in perfect German on a subject that everyone understood, and to which they enjoyed listening. The services were impressive and inspiring, and the singing of the famous Cantor Altuna and his choir was sublime. In this environment, I almost forgot the wailing and the lamenting in the synagogue at home and the tales of the misfortunes that befell the Jews two thousand years ago. I forgot the Hamans, Herods and Hadrians of all ages.

Mingling now among the people I had known in my childhood, it all came back to me, and I was anxious to attend the meeting where Rabbi Lesser was to be installed, and where he was to deliver his first sermon in Chicago.

The hall was crowded. The Rabbi spoke for nearly two hours, and had the attention of the audience, but I was rather disappointed. True, I had expected that he would preach in a manner and style somewhat similar to that used in the old days, in the small Lithuanian towns; but, nevertheless, I anticipated that, since the world had made considerable progress in the past several years, and since this was America and not Lithuania, he would speak in a more modern manner.

As it was, he confined himself mainly to the Talmud and its interpretation, and among the many subjects upon which he dwelt was a passage in the Bible from Ecclesiastes, which says: "There is not a righteous man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not."

He commented upon the meaning of this phrase, explaining it thus: If a man prays to God, or praises God, he does it because he wants to have the good will of the Creator. Or if he helps the poor or gives to charity, while he performs a very good deed, he does so because he knows that people will praise him for it, and that he will "get his reward in Heaven." When he speaks well of somebody, he knows that person will also speak well of him. In other words, if one does good, it is more or less from a selfish motive.

Rabbi Lesser concluded with the statement that there was only one man who had done a good deed without expecting any reward, and that was Father Abraham. Naturally, the audience anxiously waited to hear what it was that he had done, and this is what the Rabbi told us:

"When Father Abraham married Sarah, he did not do it for the sake of having a companion, or a housekeeper, or a mate, or a home, or for pleasure. Oh, no. Father Abraham married because he felt God would consider it right and proper for him to marry. He chose the one and the real God, and not the many gods of the heathen, who worshipped idols, and he did not expect any reward because of this. That is why God rewarded him, and chose him to be the father of the Jewish nation, as is written in the Bible — 'And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing.' "

While Rabbi Lesser spoke very forcefully, and stirred his audience at the moment, there were many critics who refused to accept his reasons as to why God had chosen Abraham to become the father of Israel.

It was Rabbi Lesser who organized the first Talmud Torah (Hebrew Free School) in Chicago, under the name of the "Moses Montefiore Hebrew School." It is still in existence and does fine work in teaching the Bible and Hebrew to the Jewish children of the city.

In later years, when the Russian government assumed a more liberal attitude towards its people, the Jews also felt a little more secure, and the "maggidim" began to discuss the topics of the day and to speak in a more intelligible manner. The Zionist movement also helped develop a better speaking technique, and soon the general policy of public speakers changed greatly. Rabbi Nathan Budzinski, in Chicago, and Reverend Masliansky, in New York, were the first we know of who spoke effectively in the new manner, and they took the people by storm. Many others began to follow their style of speaking.

* * *

Eventually, there appeared in Chicago a Yiddish paper, edited and published by a young man named Leon Zolotkoff. He was one of the "Russian intelligentsia" and a man of high caliber, a brilliant writer, linguist and Hebraist.

One of the English newspapers, I believe it was the Chicago Daily News, about that time invited a representative of every nationality to write an article in his own language. The Hebrew article was contributed by the two South Side Rabbis, Dr. Felsenthal and Dr. Hirsch. It happened that Mr. Zolotkoff and Dr. Hirsch, who did not know each other personally, were in a certain printing office at the same time. Someone asked Mr. Zolotkoff if he knew Hebrew, and when he said he did, he was asked regarding his opinion of the Hebrew articles which had appeared in the English newspaper. Mr. Zolotkoff, not aware that Dr. Hirsch was present, replied that according to his knowledge of Hebrew, Dr. Felsenthal had mastered the language to a certain extent, but that Dr. Hirsch knew almost no Hebrew.

Dr. Hirsch, who was a great scholar, became enraged upon hearing this remark from a "greenhorn west-sider." As Mr. Zolotkoff later informed me, a heated discussion ensued, during the course of which Dr. Hirsch cried: "You don't know English!" To which Mr. Zolotkoff replied: "You don't know Russian!"

"You don't know French and German!" Dr. Hirsch retorted.

"I am sorry," Mr. Zolotkoff replied, "but I do know French and I do know German, but you don't know Polish, nor do you know Hebrew or the Talmud!"

When the dispute threatened to become serious, the owner of the establishment separated them. A few days later I read a long article in the Daily Jewish Courier, published by Mr. Zolotkoff, in which he bitingly attacked the German Jews and Dr. Hirsch as only he could.

I was greatly disturbed by all this, and expressed my views in a letter to the Courier, which I took over in person. It was my pleasure then to meet Mr. Zolotkoff. I showed him my letter, in which I explained the differences between the two factions of the Jewish population, and related my experiences with both. I urged that it was necessary for the West Side Jews to be friendly toward the South Side or German Jews. Mr. Zolotkoff promised to print the letter, but he was determined, he said, to show the German Jews that they were not so important as they thought they were. However, he printed my letter, and did not criticize the German Jews any further.

Unfortunately, the strained relationship between the two classes of Jews continued to exist, and it is only recently that a better understanding has been reached, through the development of a spirit of compromise and cooperation.

That meeting with Mr. Zolotkoff marked the beginning of a friendship which lasted for years. I always admired and respected him for being a gentleman and a scholar, and a fine journalist. He later married and had three sons, Sidney, Hyman and Albert, all fine young people, and a daughter, Julia, who is as brilliant as her father.

Mr. Zolotkoff, in addition to his other accomplishments, became a lawyer and served for several years as Assistant State's Attorney under Charles S. Deneen. To my great sorrow, he passed away, in the summer of 1938, and I was called upon to speak at his funeral.

* * *

The early Jewish community developed rapidly, and in spite of the long and hard hours of work, the people began to take an interest in cultural matters. One day I was surprised and pleased to read that a Yiddish theater was to be introduced. I could not imagine what it would be like, and awaited the first performance anxiously.

The play, which was given in a hall on De Koven Street, was called "Caladunia," or "Machashaife" (witch). It was written by a well known Yiddish dramatist, Goldfaden. However, I was greatly disappointed in it. The story was not bad, but it was performed by rank amateurs — Russian-born boys and girls who tried to speak German instead of Yiddish. Their German was bad, and their acting was bad, and the play naturally suffered in consequence.

That venture, however, served to initiate the era of the Yiddish Theater, and within a short time it boasted such great actors as Adler, Thomashefsky, Golubuck, Magolesky, Kessler, Schwartz, and many others.

* * *

Fraternal organizations had a great attraction for the people in those days. Lodges were almost as popular as motion pictures are now, and attending lodge meeting in the evening was just as common as going to a movie is at present.

The president of a lodge was regarded as a man of importance, and even an ordinary member of a lodge was always conscious of the fact that he, too, belonged to an organization that commanded dignity and respect. The fact that he was entrusted with the password, and sworn to secrecy about the activities of the lodge, made him consider himself as one different and above the average man.

Practically no conversation would come to an end without the lodge question having been thoroughly discussed.

"By the way," one man would say, "I want you to join my lodge."

But before he had a chance to explain the merits thereof, the other would exclaim: "I was just going to ask you to sign an application for membership in my lodge — and here is the blank form to be filled out."

Then each would proclaim the advantages of his lodge, giving a full list of the benefits that accrued, such as sick benefits, visiting sick members, life insurance, mutual aid, attending and officiating at funerals, and so on and so forth.

The lodge meeting furnished intellectual stimulation and pleasant diversion for the great majority of the Jews of the West Side, and there were very few who did not belong to one or two organizations, while some were members of enough lodges, both Jewish and general, to keep them busy attending meetings every evening in the week.

The signs of these various organizations were used frequently as a medium of introduction. People who were strangers would become acquainted and form lasting friendships through exhibiting the signs of their lodges.

I should like to describe a few of these signs, which anyone conversant with lodge ceremonies would notice frequently on the streets, in street cars and trains, and elsewhere. Touching the fingers of the left hand to the right ear was an invitation for a reply by a member of the same lodge, whose response consisted in touching his right eye with his left hand. Or, if a member of a certain lodge had his head up, looking upwards, with two fingers of his hand on his mouth, it was an invitation for a response by another member, indicated by the latter's lowering his head and placing his left hand on his neck. There were some people who belonged to so many lodges that they had almost to perform acrobatic stunts in order to answer all of the signs.

There were two leading Jewish fraternal organizations in Chicago at that time. One was the Independent Order of B'nai Brith, which was considered the organization for the "higher class" of Jews. It also had a password and signs, but they were more moderate and not so complicated as those of other lodges. The other leading fraternal association was known as the Independent Order of Somech Noflim, which means, "assisting the needy" or more literally "supporting the fallen."

I belonged to both organizations, having first joined the Abram Aub Lodge of the B'nai Brith and later the Golden Eagle Lodge of the Somech Noflim, which had just been formed. I served as president and held other offices in both lodges.

At first, before I became accustomed to it, the lodge ceremonies, with all the signs, instructions and titles, seemed to me so ridiculous that I felt foolish about taking part, and I always considered it as the play of children. The business part of the meetings consisted of taking roll call, reading the minutes, collecting dues, hearing complaints about any of the members, discussing plans for increasing the membership and ways and means of raising money, and reports of committees. Most of it seemed quite unnecessary.

There were always two guards at the door leading to the entrance of the lodge, one standing outside the door and the other standing inside. When a member arrived after the lodge was in session, he was confronted by the outside guard, who would rap on the door in a certain manner. The inside guard would then make an announcement about as follows:

"Brother President, with your permission, I wish to inform you that the outside guard has signaled."

The president would then say: "You are instructed to ask the meaning of that signal."

The inside guard would open the wicket and repeat the president's words to the outside guard, who would then answer: "A stranger who claims to be a brother of a certain lodge desires admission."

Often the guard would get mixed up in his English, and would translate literally from the Yiddish, saying that the member desired "inlet."

After all this was reported to the president, the visitor would be admitted, and examined by an officer as to his name, password, sign, and so forth.

I was once fined a dollar for making fun of the questions and answers. I paid it, making another humorous remark, and came very nearly being fined again for this.

However, I soon realized that these lodges and the meetings were doing a great deal of good for their members, especially for the newcomers. Here they were taught discipline, order, self-control and the use of moderate language, even though the debates were usually exciting and quarrelsome. Here they had a chance to become acquainted with others, and they were given the opportunity to face an audience and gain self-confidence. Here they could always speak their minds, no matter how poor their English was. I spent many, many interesting evenings at these meetings, and took an active and leading part in the proceedings.

I remember one meeting at which the question of arranging a picnic was debated for hours. The treasury was empty, and money was badly needed for sick benefits, hall rent and other expenses. The motion of the treasurer to have a picnic was open for discussion. I spoke against the proposal, giving as my reason that the hard work and expense involved, especially in view of the trouble we had had with hoodlums during the last picnic, would not be worth the little revenue we might realize from the venture.

When I finished, the president called on a Mr. Abrams for his opinion, introducing him with a few flattering remarks.

"We have here," explained the president, "one of our members who has had a great deal of experience in the matter of picnics. He did excellent work for the picnic we had last year. He was also very active and accomplished good results at the picnics of other lodges of which he is a member. I would therefore like to ask Brother Abrams for his opinion."

Mr. Abrams was a tall, bony man, with a great deal of color in his face. He made a long speech, intermingling English, Hebrew and Roumanian Yiddish. Adopting a superior attitude, he stated that he was of the opinion that we must have a picnic by all means.

"Although," he added, "I was not very much encouraged by the members of the lodge for the hard work I did at the last picnic — yet I will forget about that, and I will be glad to cooperate with the committee that is to be appointed for that purpose."

Here the president interrupted him, asking: "Brother Abrams, what did you mean by the remark that the members did not appreciate the good work that you did at the picnic? I would like to know about it, and no doubt all of the members here would like to hear from you on this matter."

"Upon your request, Mr. President," said Mr. Abrams, putting his thumbs in the armholes of his vest, taking a few steps forward and raising his head as high as he could.

"Who was it," he inquired, "who procured smoked beef for sandwiches for ten per cent less than the wholesale price, and got five pounds as a gift for the lodge? It was I!" he exclaimed, placing his hand on his breast.

"Who was it that bought all of the pop at a discount of twenty-five per cent, and got ten boxes for nothing?" he continued. "It was I! Who was it that peddled around among the bakers, and procured almost all of the bread for the sandwiches without any cost? It was I. Who was it who obtained ten boxes of beer for nothing, and paid for the balance way below the wholesale price? Of course, it was I. And when the drinks and the food were delivered to the picnic place, who was it that watched like a dog and protected it against the hoodlums, lest it be stolen? It was I!

"But when everything passed off nicely, and the lodge made money, who was given a medal? Was it given to me? Oh, no. It was given to somebody who didn't do one-tenth of the work that I did!"

Stepping up on the platform, he went on: "Brother President and brothers, don't think for a minute that I care very much for the medal." He unbuttoned his coat, and said: "Here I have four medals pinned on my vest, so you see that I don't need any more. But I want to prove that the members of the lodge do not appreciate the good, hard work that one is doing for the benefit of the lodge."

All the members felt rather guilty and embarrassed, but no one said anything.

"Before I sit down," Mr. Abrams continued, "I want to put a question to Mr. Horwich, who is against the picnic." Turning to me, he inquired: "Mr. Horwich, I want to ask you a question. If we have no picnic at all, then we are sure not to make a cent, but if we do have a picnic, we have a chance to make some money. In any event, we have everything to gain and nothing to lose. Then why are you against it?"

Before I was able to answer, my old friend, Mr. Goldstein, asked for the floor. Turning to Mr. Abrams, he said:

"I will give you an instance which will answer the question you asked of Mr. Horwich. On the way home from peddling one afternoon, I met another peddler and asked him how business was. He answered that it was so bad that it could not be worse, because he did not sell a cent's worth the whole day long, and had to go home empty-handed.

" 'Can it be worse, Mr. Goldstein?' he asked me.

" 'Yes, it can be worse,' I replied. 'I also did not sell a cent's worth of merchandise, and in addition, while resting on the sidewalk, a fellow grabbed two pair of stockings and a few handkerchiefs, which cost me sixty-five cents — so that makes me worse off than you are!'

"Thus, you see, Mr. Abrams, you are wrong when you say that we have everything to gain and nothing to lose by having a picnic. I know that it can happen, and that it did happen to lodges that held picnics, that they lost money. I know of one lodge that lost over a hundred dollars last year.

"Therefore," Mr. Goldstein suggested, "I propose that each member be assessed three dollars, or that he should be asked to make a loan of five dollars, if it is decided to have a picnic, so that we will have enough money to work with, and be secured against losses."

Mr. Goldstein's motion was carried, and each member advanced five dollars. I am sorry to relate that they got back only fifty cents on the dollar.

I used what influence I had in these lodges to try to bring the West Side Orthodox Jews and the South Side Reformed Jews into closer relationship. I made it a point to bring the matter up at every meeting, and we had long debates on the subject. At first the outlook was not very favorable, but by constantly bringing the matter to the attention of the members, my efforts began to show results. Dr. Hirsch, who had been a strong opponent of Orthodox Judaism and rather cold to Orthodox Jews, gradually began to change his attitude. Eventually he came to accept invitations to speak at Orthodox synagogues, and would sometimes even go out of his way to meet the leading representatives of Orthodox Jewry, and establish closer contact with them.

Thus a better understanding between the two groups was gradually brought about.

I was informed that Mr. Samuel D. Schwartz, executive director of Sinai Temple, also had a great deal to do with bringing about this more satisfactory state of affairs. A competent, highly intelligent and likable individual, he had great influence with Dr. Hirsch. Mr. Schwartz has done outstanding work for Sinai Temple. A man of ability and learning, he is and has been prominent in all religious and educational enterprises in the Jewish community.

* * *

One day I read in the papers that Chicago and other cities throughout the country were making preparations to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus. There happened to be a meeting of the Golden Eagle Lodge that evening, and as an officer of the Lodge, I informed the members of the news and proposed that since we were quite a large organization, with some twelve hundred members and nine branches in Chicago, we ought to consider a plan for taking part in the celebration. After a lengthy debate, it was agreed to appoint a committee, with myself as chairman, to discuss the question and render a report at the next meeting of the Grand Lodge ten days later.

When the Grand Lodge met, it was decided that a special meeting of representatives of all the lodges be called to take action on the proposal. A few weeks later, this meeting was held, and it lasted until twelve o'clock, so heated was the discussion. It was finally decided that we should participate in the celebration, and I was selected as the head of the undertaking.

I must say that it proved to be a bigger and more serious job than I had anticipated, and it gave me much more work and trouble than I had bargained for. I had to attend all of the meetings of the sub-committees which I had appointed, supervise the raising of money from the several lodges, and outline our program. Above all, we could not run the risk of failing to make a good showing. We had to count on being successful, so that we would not be made a laughing stock in the eyes of the non-Jews, as well as our fellow-Jews, in Chicago.

It was an exciting period for the various groups and nationalities of the city. All were busy organizing and holding meetings and making plans. The activities involved kept me from my business and from the company of my intimate friends for weeks. But when the great day finally came, we were ready and in splendid form.

The Marshal of the demonstration, if I remember rightly, was General Miles. We all assembled on Michigan Avenue, between 22nd Street and Roosevelt Road, and each group knew its place. Our group, which was assigned to the middle of the procession, consisted of about nine hundred people, and our marching order was as follows: First came a company on horseback, with myself at the head, preceded by a band. Next came several hundred men wearing top hats and uniform ties and coats, and carrying canes which were all alike. Behind them marched another band, and then came representatives of each lodge, all dressed as nearly alike as possible, with white gloves and colored canes. We marched eight abreast, and in order to keep in line, each man held his cane horizontally, so that the man next to him could hold the end of it with his right hand, while holding the end of his own cane with his left hand. The procession lasted from noon until six o'clock in the evening.

It goes without saying that I was extremely nervous and fearful lest we fail to make a favorable impression. I could see thousands of people standing along the curbs on each side of Michigan Avenue, applauding the marchers as they passed by, and I wondered how we would be received when they recognized a Jewish group, with the flag of our fraternal organization beside the

American flag. I was happily surprised at the reception given us, however, and deeply stirred when I observed that we received more applause than any of the groups ahead of us or behind us.

Going west on Adams Street, we reached the Federal Building, and there saw President Harrison on the balcony, with many of the notables of Chicago. Just as we approached the spot, I turned and faced my group, and commanded a halt. They obeyed, and I then shouted that everyone should give three cheers for the President of the United States, and for the American flag. When the cheers subsided, the President arose, and lifting a glass, stated that he was drinking to the health and happiness of the people of Chicago. It was thrilling to me, and apparently to all present. As we resumed our march, the applause was so great that I could not manage my horse, and two policemen had to come to my assistance to help quiet him.

When it was all over, our organization was considered to have made the best showing. I was proud and pleased.

The Chicago Daily News printed an article about the parade, and included a picture of me, which I believe was the first picture of a West Side Jew to be printed in a Chicago paper. Contrary to all expectations, said the article, the group of Jewish people had made a fine appearance. Unfortunately, the majority of the people thought of all Jews as peddlers with beards, and could not imagine that we could look so fine.

At the next meeting of our lodge, some of the officers of the Grand Lodge addressed us, lauding us highly for our performance. One speaker stated that he had heard from a good many non-Jews that they never realized there were Jews of our type on the West Side, having thought we were all of the crude, ignorant, peddler type. They were surprised to see such fine looking men, riding on horses and marching in order, straight and erect as soldiers.

The splendid impression we made helped to bring about a better understanding between the West Side and the South Side Jews, for which I was very thankful. We had been a great surprise to them, it seems, as they had not believed we could accomplish something of which they could be proud or that would redound to the credit of Jews in general.

Although we had been most successful in our purpose, which was to show the Jew in a better light, I was sorry to find that some jealousy had been aroused among the members of our organization. One of the men whom I had defeated in being chosen as chairman of the undertaking visited the various lodges and deplored the fact that the demonstration had cost the organization about a thousand dollars. He claimed it was money thrown away, and that the only purpose it served was to further my ambition to become the president of the Grand Lodge. When I was later nominated for that office, I declined to accept, because of these malicious charges.

CHAPTER V

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

One day I received a letter from home, stating that two of my younger brothers, David and Sam, were on their way to Chicago. I was greatly surprised, and torn between joy and anxiety. I was overjoyed to know that I would have two of my brothers with me, that we would not be lonely, and would be able to speak our hearts to each other — yet I was worried regarding their future. I knew they would have to start out as I did — as "greenhorns" — and would encounter many difficulties in trying to earn a living. I, at least, had had some experience of life, but they had none. Many a night I spent thinking it over, and worrying how things would turn out. At last they arrived.

David proved to be a very nice, straightforward, honest individual, with the characteristics of my father. He possessed good common sense and was easy-going, gentle and contented, and I knew he would be satisfied with anything that came along. He had a fine personality, and was liked by all who knew him.

My brother, Sam, was tall, strong and good-looking, but he had my mother's nature, being of a worrying and pessimistic disposition, although a very hard worker and very likable.

I encouraged both of them as much as possible. I told them how very hard it would be in the beginning, but that I would help them in every way, and that in time everything would turn out all right. I placed both of them as boarders in the home of a Mr. Cohen, who lived in the same block I did, on Liberty Street. He was a manufacturer of iron hooks for meat packers, and was doing fairly well. Mr. Cohen was a small, stout man, honest, good hearted and full of life, and enjoyed talking politics and praising the Republican party. He and his wife accepted my brothers with open arms, and did everything they could to make their lives as pleasant as possible.

My brother, David, I started out in my line — peddling, buying forty or fifty dollars' worth of merchandise for him. I took him with me, and from nine o'clock until twelve, I watched the horse and wagon while he took the street I indicated to him, following him as he went from one house to another. At one place he stayed quite a long time, and when I drove over to see what was keeping him, I saw him emerge with a big smile. He had sold two suits of flannel underwear, earning a dollar on the sale. I felt he had done enough work for one day and suggested going home, but he was so enthusiastic over his success that he insisted on continuing. This was the first money he had ever earned.

I was tempted, as I told Mr. Goldstein that evening, to plant some customers for David to bolster him up the next day, had I known how to do so. However, as it proved, this was hardly necessary, for David was full of courage and worked hard. He worked so hard, in fact, that I was afraid for his health; but he refused to cut down on the load which he was carrying, and soon he was making enough to contribute toward the allowance we sent home to our parents.

My brother, Sam, was too young to start out for himself, and I was anxious to give him the advantage of a little schooling. Accordingly, I engaged a teacher to instruct him in English, in the afternoons, besides which he attended evening school. He spent his mornings helping in a small bottle business that I had started in the basement of the house in which he lived, about three or four months before my brothers arrived.

I embarked in that business through a strange coincidence. It happened that Robert Perlman, the brother of my ex-partner, Max Perlman, had come to Chicago some time after I did, but I knew nothing about it. Instead of beginning as a peddler, as did most newcomers, he started out in the bottle business, and made his home on the North Side. He employed a man by the name of Rubenzik, who had also come from Koenigsberg. The latter, knowing I was in Chicago, looked me up. In the course of our conversation, he mentioned that he was working for Robert Perlman. He went on to say that he was dissatisfied with him, and with the work, and suggested that I go into that business, and that he would be glad to do the work for me, if I financed it. I acted on his suggestion, and by the time my brothers arrived, I was earning a satisfactory extra income from that business. Mr. Rubenzik bought the old bottles and handled the hauling and cleaning, while I did the selling and financing.

I put Sam to helping Mr. Rubenzik, paying him five dollars a week, in addition to paying for his room and board. Thus he had enough money for necessities and was able to continue his schooling.

Several months later, I decided to give up peddling and devote all my time to the bottle business, as it promised excellent possibilities. I turned my peddling business over to my brother, David, and rented a place on Halsted Street, near Polk, where I could operate on a larger scale in the bottle business, and within the next five or six years became quite successful in that line.

That site has since become famous throughout the country— not because of my bottle business, but because a certain group of women wanted to establish there a social center for the poor of the neighborhood — known as Hull House.

Although I had a long-term lease for the premises, who could resist the pleas of these charming ladies, in their desire to serve humanity? I agreed to find another location.

In time, David found traveling with a pack of dry goods too hard, and I arranged to have him and Mr. Goldstein also embark in the bottle business. They managed it very satisfactorily, Mr.

Goldstein working inside and David on the outside, and they did fairly well.

* * *

About that time, the serious matter of matrimony unexpectedly confronted me, and it came about indirectly through my brother, Harris, in this way:

I was informed that Rabbi Anixter, the Rabbi of the so-called "Large Synagogue" on Clark Street, had a letter for me, which turned out to be from Harris. He had sent it from Odessa, where he had been employed as a bookkeeper in a wholesale hardware firm. He stated that he was on his way to America, although he intended to go first to Palestine. Having lost my address, he hit upon the idea of sending his letter to Rabbi Anixter, in Chicago, asking him to try to locate me and see that I received it. It was on this occasion that I met the Rabbi's daughter, May.

The thought of marriage had not heretofore entered my mind, although I had many friends among the West Side girls, whom I met at the community's social functions, or "balls," as they were called. Dancing was then the chief pastime of the young people, and wishing to become proficient, I had taken lessons from Professor Kretlow, one of the best dancing teachers in Chicago at the time. I soon acquired the art, and spent many enjoyable evenings in this diversion, and was frequently complimented on my dancing.

It was interesting for me to find that in this country the problem of matrimony was handled quite differently from the way it was managed in Europe. There the young people did not have much to say about it, as it was considered the duty of the parents to arrange the marriages.

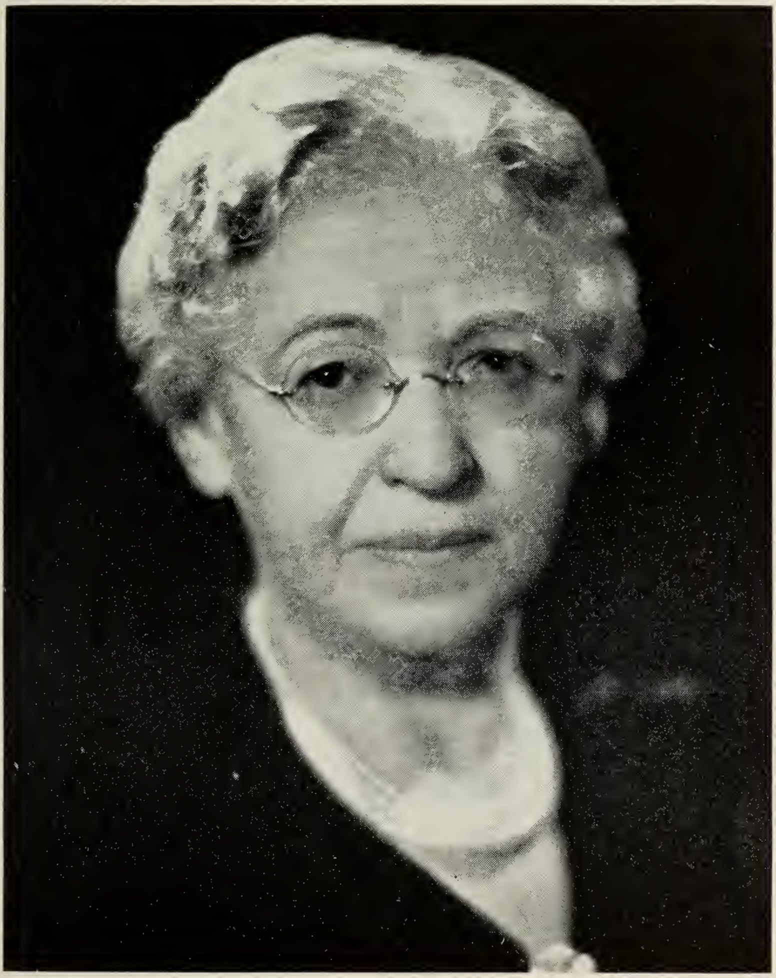
In this connection, the son was regarded as an asset, while the daughter was considered a liability. The main problem parents had with regard to a son was to get him freed from military service, and after this was accomplished, the young man was greatly in demand, especially if his parents were of the "upper" class, either financially or culturally.

The "shadchen," or marriage broker, would at once get busy and bring to the parents a list of names of prospective brides, from which they could make their selection. In most cases, when a young man married, his future was practically assured. He was either taken into business by his father-in-law, or given sufficient dowry to start in business for himself, or was taken into his wife's home as one of the family, and provided with all of the necessities of life for years. Of course, this procedure applied only to the well-to-do and to the middle class Jews. The poor simply got married, and had to rely on fate to take care of them.

An amusing incident in this connection comes to mind. About five years after I had left home, David had written to inform me that my childhood friend, Berke, son of Zavel, who had been my partner in the incident with Herr Ashfort, had just been married. The marriage, he wrote, took place in July, and Berke's wedding gift from his parents-in-law consisted of a winter overcoat, a pair of rubbers and an umbrella. Apparently without realizing the humor of the situation, David went on to describe how Berke had gone through the town with his bride, wearing his overcoat and rubbers, and carrying his umbrella, as the people of the town admired him, his bride and the gifts.

I read the letter to some of my friends, and of course they all laughed at the description of the bridegroom dressed like that in July. However, I explained to them how innocent the writer of the letter was — that he considered the gifts themselves interesting and important, so that the situation did not seem absurd to him.

Here in America, I was surprised to find that the parents had very little to say regarding the marriage of their children. The most important person concerned was the girl. A boy had to take lessons on how to approach a girl. He would have to take



MRS. BERNARD HORWICH (*Wife of the Author*)

her out to theatres, parties and dances, bring her flowers and feed her candy and ice cream. After a year or so, he had to propose to her formally, and obtain the consent of her parents. Following the engagement, he was supposed to give her some valuable gift of jewelry, and then he was settled for good. If he learned that he had made a mistake, he could not change his mind, but had to go through with the marriage — or stand the consequences of a suit for breach of promise or serious difficulties with the girl's relatives.

Among my young contemporaries, the most important requirement was that one speak English well and without an accent. A girl who could do so was considered a splendid catch, and if, besides, she was American born, she stood ace high and was still more in demand.

The Rabbi's daughter, May, had such qualifications. She was born in this country, could speak and write English well, and could also speak Yiddish fluently. The fact that she was the daughter of a Rabbi added dignity to her other qualities, for an Orthodox Rabbi was then especially regarded with great respect and reverence.

My friends were very much interested, and pointed out that I ought to consider it an honor to have a Rabbi as a father-in-law, and that my parents would be overjoyed with such a marriage. Although I was attracted to her by her own fine qualities, I must admit that these comments had some influence with me. I visited her quite often, cultivating a closer friendship, and we were soon engaged. Six months later, on January 2, 1887, we were married.

The wedding took place in Clare's Hall, on the near North Side. It was considered a "high-class" place at that time. Dinner was served to several hundred guests, and the festivities lasted until two o'clock in the morning.

Although I had visited my fiancee often, I did not get to know my prospective father-in-law very well during this period. Whenever I came to the house, I found that he had either gone to the synagogue — or, if at home, that he was busy speaking to people, or studying the Talmud, or occupied otherwise. After my marriage, however, I became better acquainted with the Rabbi and his wife, and found them both interesting characters.

My mother-in-law, whose name was Basse, which in English would be "Betty," was the typical wife of an Orthodox Rabbi of the old school. She was very sensible, pious and God-fearing, and reserved in manner. Like all women of her type, she considered her function in life was to look after the comfort of her husband, and to work from morning until night at housekeeping and the rearing of her children. She had four daughters and one son. She lived to be over ninety years of age, and during the last fourteen years of her widowhood made her home with me.

I remember one evening, shortly after the cessation of the World War, when we had several prominent people at our home for dinner, a discussion arose as to the causes of the war. Each of our guests gave a different reason. One of them asked my old mother-in-law jokingly:

"Grandmother, what do you think was the reason for this terrible war?"

Unhesitatingly, she replied: "The trouble with people nowadays is that they are not religious. They have no faith in God. They do not pray. They do not go in the ways of God. Instead of that, they are jealous of each other. They envy anyone who has better clothes, better furniture in his house, or an automobile. This jealousy arouses a passion in people to try to get ahead of one another. This causes friction, and that is why we had the World War."

Everybody smiled indulgently, but Mr. Nahum Sokolow, who was one of the guests, explained that, while the answer of the aged woman might sound funny, she was entirely right, except that she had expressed it in her own way, from the standpoint of the individual — that if one enlarged upon the subject and talked about nations instead of individuals, he would see that it was just the same.

"England," he added, "was jealous in that Germany had too powerful an army. Germany envied England because she had too powerful a navy. Russia wanted to get more territory. France wanted to take away some provinces. All this jealousy and the eagerness of one nation to get ahead of the other was what brought on the war, and thus she is right."

I recall another incident which demonstrates her good sense. Her husband had an expensive cane with a gold head, which had been presented to him by the members of the synagogue. One afternoon the cane disappeared, after the colored scrubwoman had cleaned the house. While Mrs. Anixter suspected the woman, she was not sure of her guilt. The next day, when the woman came for her pay, she simply remarked:

"My husband's expensive cane has disappeared. It seems that somebody has taken it, and while we don't care about the loss of the cane, I am sorry for the one who took it, because I know that anyone who steals something from a Jewish Rabbi, or from any religious person, will die within that year — or will meet with some other terrible trouble."

The poor colored woman seemed frightened, and mumbled all kinds of questions as to the truth of the statement. She left hurriedly, and that afternoon someone threw the cane into a back room of the apartment, through the open window.

Before leaving for a visit to Palestine in the year 1927, I bade my pious old mother-in-law farewell. She was quite ill at the time, and I admonished her to take care of herself.

"I am old enough to die," she told me. "But I will not die until you bring back to me some of the sacred sand of Palestine."

"Then I had better not bring you any, so that you may go on living," I said.

But she pleaded with me and insisted that I do so.

Strangely enough, only a few months after I returned with the precious sand, Mrs. Anixter took sick and died. Her wish was fulfilled, and she was laid to rest with the bag of sand from Palestine beneath her head.

As I have stated before, my father-in-law, Rabbi Anixter, was a man of great piety and learning, open and aboveboard in every respect. However, he did have a temper, and would not be crossed or contradicted by anyone. Arguing with him was futile.

One cold afternoon, I happened to be in his neighborhood and went up to see him. I found him alone in the house, trying to explain to a colored boy what to do with a sack of coal the latter had brought into the house. He was talking in Yiddish, and, of course, the boy did not understand him. The Rabbi became impatient at having to spend his valuable time with a little urchin. I soon found out what he wanted, and instructed the boy what to do.

I then started a discussion with my father-in-law, asking him — since he was busy studying day in and day out — why he did not spend one or two hours a week learning the English language, so that he would have no trouble understanding what the colored boy wanted to know about where to place the coal.

He shot back this answer: "You want me to study the language of that colored boy. Why don't you tell him that he should study my language?"

"But, Father," I said, "this is the language of the country. It is your duty to know it."

"I have no answer for a fool like you," he retorted.

Undeterred, I then cited a sentence from the Psalms, which says, "Answer the fool according to his foolishness."

"You might answer me accordingly," I suggested.

But he came right back at me, saying: "That sentence was meant for the ordinary fools, or for the general run of fools, but not for such an exceptional fool as you are."

It was told of him that he used to get up every morning between four and five o'clock, and go to the synagogue to study and pray until breakfast time. One morning, he was held up by two young men, who searched his pockets and found a quarter. One of them spoke German, and asked:

"Where are you going, old man?"

The Rabbi replied: "I am going to the synagogue to pray."

"What are you praying for?" the man inquired.

"I am praying," retorted the Rabbi, "that God should help all men, that they should be able to make a decent living, and that they should not have to go around on the streets at night to hold up people and rob them, as you do, and then be arrested and go to prison."

"You had better give him back that quarter," the second man remarked. "He is a dangerous guy."

The quarter was returned, and the Rabbi was permitted to go his way.

One day, when I called at his house, I observed a large number of books in a corner, piled up almost to the ceiling. I asked him what they were, and he said the books contained his own creation — a commentary which he had written on some parts of the Talmud, and the books had just come from the publisher.

I opened one of the books and looked at it, upon which he remarked:

"What is the use of your looking into it? Your ignorant head cannot understand anything in there, any more than a goose."

"Maybe so," I replied, "but here is something that I do understand."

"Well," he said, "prove it to me. Go ahead and read."

I read to him a paragraph from the book, which stated that it is forbidden for anyone to enter an old, dilapidated dwelling that looks like a ruin, and three reasons are given for this admonition: First, because it is dangerous — the building is liable to cave in. Secondly, because there may be ghosts. Thirdly, he may be suspected of having been there with a woman.

"Ah," he said, "so you do know something, eh? Well, if so, have you any comments to make on it?"

He wanted to see whether I would make the same comments as he had on this paragraph.

"I think I have," I answered.

"Well," he said, "what is it?"

"The third reason," I told him, "was not necessary, for where will you find a man so crazy as to date up a woman to go with him into an old, dilapidated ruin, which is likely to crash in at any minute?"

He understood that I was joking, and threw the book in my face.

Having heard that I occasionally spoke at various meetings, he once expressed a desire to hear me, and I invited him to come on the next such occasion. He listened attentively to my talk, and when I afterward asked his opinion, he remarked:

"If I could speak as well as you, I would speak better than you."

This is an instance of how the Talmudic mind works. His meaning was that if he had my command of the language, he would have done better than I did.

Another anecdote regarding this venerable man comes to mind. Harris and I took him to visit the old Hebrew Institute, and he was shocked to observe in the entrance-way the likeness of a partially clothed female.

"Pooh! A naked woman!" he exclaimed.

"How do you know, Rabbi," inquired Harris, smiling, "that this is the portrait of a woman?" An Orthodox Rabbi was not supposed to be familiar with such things.

"Because I can see that it is not a man!" flashed back the quick-witted Rabbi.

Years afterward, when my oldest son brought his fiancee to meet him, he remarked to her discomfiture:

"I see people have been telling lies about you. They say you are good-looking."

The poor girl did not know just how to take this. It happens that she was actually nice-looking, and the Rabbi, in his own way, had paid her a compliment.

About seven or eight months after Rabbi Anixter became my father-in-law, he came to my office to seek my advice about two matters. One was concerning a sum of $265.00, which he had saved up and wished to invest, so that he could use the income to aid poor families; and the other was concerning the divorce of his daughter, Sarah.

I told him that the best and safest thing for him to do with the money would be to deposit it with the First National Bank, where he would receive three per cent interest. This he absolutely refused to consider, maintaining that he would take no interest from anybody. I tried to argue with him, and as usual, he lost his temper and shouted at me:

"Do you expect a Rabbi to take interest?"

"Well," I asked him, "what do you want to do — keep the money in the bank without interest?" This did not appeal to him.

He then suggested that, since I dealt with that bank, and they knew me well, I should ask them to take him in as a partner, and pay him the profit on his $265.00 investment. I finally explained to him, after vainly trying to convince him that this was not feasible, that it would not look well for his congregation to have a Rabbi who was a partner in the First National Bank. I informed him, however, that he could buy stock in the bank with his money, but warned him that the stock might go up or down, so that there might be a loss instead of a profit. He didn't want that, either.

After a further discussion, I suggested that he become a partner in my business, and that I would pay him a profit according to his investment. He agreed to this, with the understanding that I meant exactly what I said — that it would be a business proposition, and not a matter of taking interest. The question was settled, and every sixty days I sent him a check for a few dollars, together with some figures purporting to show his profits.

He then discussed the matter of the divorce. His daughter had married a cigar maker, named Sam Jervitz, who had been reared in this country and had gone through school. The fact that he was "Americanized" was very important to her. Like many of her friends, she had passed up fine young men who were in business and doing well, but who were "greenhorns." Soon after their marriage, Sam lost his job, got into bad company and frittered away what money he had saved up. He was unable to find another job, and they had to part.

I had studied the Jewish divorce laws in the Talmud, but had never actually witnessed the ceremony, and upon Rabbi Anixter's request, willingly agreed to assist Sarah in the proceedings. The civil divorce suit was pending at the time, and the Court had indicated the decree would be granted. It was agreed that as soon as the Jewish divorce was granted, the husband was to receive the sum of $50.00 from my hands.

At the time appointed, I went to the home of the Rabbi who was to officiate. He lived on Wilson Street, in three small, very uninviting rooms. Waiting to assist him with the case were five typical East-European Jews. One was to act as the secretary, writing the divorce in script, as required. Another was to dictate it, and a third was to act as watcher, to see that the spelling was correct. The remaining two men were to be witnesses.

After waiting several hours, the formalities were finally begun. Each of the assistants took his proper place, and the husband stood on one side of the room, with his wife facing him on the other side. The Rabbi, a little man with a long beard, held a book in his hands, which he consulted as he gave the husband his instructions.

"I will ask you some questions," he said, "to which you must answer the truth. During the proceedings, you must not talk about anything else, but only answer 'Yes' or 'No.' "

The Rabbi then started the ceremony, asking: "Your name is Sam Jervitz, the son of this and this man? Answer."

"Yes," was the reply.

"This woman, Sarah," the Rabbi continued, "the daughter of Rabbi Anixter, is your wife? Answer."

"Yes," said Sam.

"You, the husband of this wife, are willing to divorce her? Answer."

"Provided I get my fifty dollars!" exclaimed the husband.

Right there everything stopped.

"I told you not to talk about anything else," the Rabbi scolded.

The proceedings had to be started over from the beginning. When the same question was put to him again, Sam hesitated for a moment, and then turned to me.

"Can I rely on you for the fifty bucks?" he asked.

Again the ceremony had to be started over. When this had happened several more times, because Sam would not stick to a "Yes" or "No" answer, the Rabbi became very angry and threatened to give up the case altogether unless he followed instructions implicitly.

I assured Sam, by showing him the money, that he would get it as promised, and he finally answered all the questions properly.

During all this time, Sarah stood and trembled for fear he would back out. Finally all formalities were satisfactorily completed, and the Rabbi handed the decree of divorce to Sam. He and his wife were then instructed to stand near to each other, and Sarah was told to hold out both hands to receive the decree from her husband. As soon as she had the paper in her hands, she grasped it and ran away, exclaiming happily, "Thank God. Now I am free!" She is still free, never having remarried.

Sarah proved to be very sensible and able. She studied nursing and eventually was engaged as chief nurse in the Chicago Home for Jewish Orphans, in which capacity she remained for forty years, and was then pensioned.

* * *

My brother, David, soon followed my example, and married Eva Cohen, the daughter of his landlord. He was really too young for such a venture, but Eva was a very lovely girl — and he no doubt also was influenced by our father's advice to him in his letters that he marry and settle down, in accordance with the dictates of the Bible. I am glad to record that the marriage turned out very well, and they were blessed with splendid children.

No sooner was David married, than I received a wire from New York, stating that Harris was on his way to Chicago. Going to the station to meet him, I pictured him as he was when I left home — an intelligent, lively, good-looking, carefree youngster.

When he got off the train, lo and behold, we saw before us a mature man, with a beard, who was married and the father of two daughters.

As we were leaving the railroad station, his first remark was: "You know, you have here one of the greatest seas of sweet water that I know of, namely, Lake Michigan."

Looking up at the sun, and figuring his position, he then pointed and said: "Lake Michigan should be in about this direction." He was correct.

We were very proud of our brother, Harris. There wasn't a worthwhile book which he had not read. There wasn't a writer, journalist, scientist, statesman, artist, painter or philosopher that he did not know by name and by his works. He was a brilliant Talmudist and could speak German, Hebrew, Russian, Polish, Yiddish and English, and had a good knowledge of French. He was a scholar and a philosopher, but above all, he was a humorist and an optimist, and was always busy thinking up some good joke on himself or someone else. His greatest enjoyment in life was to read books, drink tea, smoke cigarettes, and discuss well known figures in history. I enjoyed every minute when I was with him, and from the day he arrived in Chicago until the time he closed his eyes forever, there was hardly a time, except when I was out of the city, that we were not together.

Once, at a Zionist luncheon in New York, which I attended, Mr. Nahum Sokolow, one of the foremost of the Jewish intellectuals, addressed the group. Pointing to me, he said:

"This man has a brother in Chicago who is one of the greatest, if not the greatest intellectual Jew in the United States."

It did not take Harris long to master the English language and to become adjusted to his new environment. We opened a bottle shop for him on Canal Street, and thus we four brothers were all in the same line of business.

Four or five weeks after Harris' arrival, I took him to a Yiddish theater on Jefferson Street, in the Metropolitan Hall. The play dealt with the usual theme of such productions — the girl was in love with a young man, whom her father wanted her to give up for another of his choice. Harris was bored. He liked neither the play nor the acting. Finally, he exclaimed:

"You know, the boy that the father has chosen for his daughter seems to be a nice, good fellow, and she should marry him; but she refuses him, just because his mustache is not stylish enough. She shows that she does not merit any attention. Therefore, there is nothing further for me to do here, so let's go."

I burst out laughing, and we got up and left as the people in the audience stared at us.

It happened that a Republican campaign was in progress for the election of various officials, including members of the Board of Tax Equalization. Being now an American citizen, I felt important, and was interested in attending political meetings. As it was known that I was a Republican, I was invited to attend a meeting of that party to be held on a Sunday afternoon in a hall on Canal Street. The main speaker and candidate was a young West Side Jew, named Sol Simon. I thought this would be a good opportunity for Harris to learn something about the political system of this country, and asked him to come with me. Harris was both impressed and amused with it all, so much so that he described the proceedings in detail in a Hebrew letter to some of his co-intellectuals in Russia, Bialik, Ginzberg, and Frischman.

The chairman of the meeting was a short, stout veterinarian, who attempted to be humorous.

"Friends," he said to the audience in Yiddish, upon introducing Mr. Simon, "just look at this candidate — an obscure, insignificant fellow who knows almost nothing about politics. His business also amounts to very little. He is a petty notion trader. All in all, we see before us just a little immigrant Jew, who amounts to nothing — but the Republican party is such a great and liberal organization that it wants to give everybody a fair chance and a square deal. Therefore, they have placed this simple little fellow on the ticket as a member of the Board of Equalization."

Here a voice from the audience broke in: "No matter how little the candidate is, how can he be put on someone's 'board?' " The English word "board" sounds the same as the Yiddish word for "beard."

Of course, it was Harris who had made this remark, and it was evident that the introduction of the candidate had the same effect upon him as had the performance at the Yiddish theater.

The poor little candidate was very nervous and uncomfortable at this joke at his expense. He seemed at a loss as to how to act. Should he take it good-naturedly, or should he show his disapproval of such an introduction? It turned out, however, that he was not such a lamb as the chairman had indicated him to be. He arose, and in a clear voice, using good English, and in a good-humored manner, spoke as follows:

"Mr. Chairman," he said, "you are a veterinarian, coming in contact every day with sick horses. You may or may not be a good judge of horses' ailments. But let me tell you that you know very little about politics and about making speeches, especially at a meeting of Republicans, where everyone present is a good American citizen and a gentleman. Your attempt to be funny at somebody else's expense does not fit here. It may be proper in your stable, where your audience consists of outworn nags and shady horse traders, but not here.

"Furthermore, I want you to understand that a public office is a dignified and respectable trust, and if a political party selects a man for such an office, that man must be worthy. Therefore, the chairman of a meeting where such an office is being discussed should also at least be a gentleman."

Mr. Simon spoke for half an hour, and had the audience with him from beginning to end. When he finished, they applauded him for several minutes. He was subsequently elected, and became quite a political leader, the first, in fact, among the Jews on the West Side. Unfortunately, however, his frail body could not stand the strain of his many duties, and he became ill and died.

* * *

Coming home one evening, I was greatly surprised to find a young man sitting in the kitchen. He did not answer when I spoke to him in English.

"He claims that he knew you in Poniemon," Harris informed me.

I finally recognized him to be our brother, Henry. Great was our joy in now being five brothers here together.

Henry had a long story to tell about his experience. He had been in the manufacturing business, he told us, in Odessa, Russia, making children's beds. Because of political persecution of the Jews in that city, he had to leave hurriedly. He had turned his place of business over to someone else, and getting together as much money as he could, had come to America.

Now we had another problem. What was to be done with Henry? However, after four weeks, I was able to obtain work for him in a steel tool factory. It was a German concern, and the workmen spoke German, which made it pleasant for him, and he got along very well. He started at twelve dollars a week, and within the next few months was earning eighteen dollars a week.

Considering all the circumstances, we got along fairly well, although Harris and Henry were at times unhappy because their families were still in Europe. That was a problem to be solved later. Until his family came over, Harris lived with me, and Henry also lived with us for a time.

Soon we had another newcomer, Tillie Horwich, a cousin of ours — the daughter of my mother's brother. She was nineteen years old, good-looking, and a girl of fine character. She could read and write Yiddish, which was considered quite an accomplishment. Cousin Tillie stayed with us for about two years, and then married a Mr. Katz, who ran a grocery store in the neighborhood. We were all very fond of her, and regarded her as one of the closest members of the family. A short time later, two of her sisters, with their husbands and children, came over, and the family kept increasing.

* * *

Having accumulated a little surplus money, I followed the general custom, and decided to buy a house. Through a real estate man, I bought a house on Halsted Street, which I sold eight months later at a profit of fifteen hundred dollars.

I then invested in a three-story brick building on Forquier Street, for which I paid eight thousand dollars, and moved in with my family as soon as the deal was closed. We had been living in an old frame house near my place of business on Halsted Street, paying a rental of six dollars a month, and it was there that my two sons, Arthur and Philip, were born.

In our new home, we occupied a fine eight-room flat, and began to live more comfortably and enjoyably. Although I eventually sold the building at a loss of eleven hundred dollars, we lived there for many years, and derived a good income therefrom in the meantime.

* * *

Every second or third evening, we five brothers all met at my home, and talked of various matters — business, politics, the "old country," and about our parents and how much money to send them. We had been forwarding money to them regularly, and we eventually brought the sum up to a hundred dollars a month. We had very enjoyable evenings together, and we always got along very well.

The only one who had any complaint to make was Henry, who had become dissatisfied with what he was doing. He felt it beneath him to work for eighteen dollars a week in this "land of opportunity," when in Odessa he had been a manufacturer in his own right. He felt that since I had helped put all my other brothers in business, I should at least do as much for him. He claimed to be an expert in making children's iron beds, and urged me to help him get started in that line, believing he could thereby develop a fine business for both of us.

Through a friend who was doing business with Marshall Field and Company, I made inquiries of that concern as to whether iron beds were being manufactured in this country, and what the prospects were for bringing them into the market. I learned that all the iron and metal beds which they bought were imported from England, but that there was a heavy duty imposed upon them, and there would, therefore, be a good market for anyone who could make them here.

Henry having assured me that he knew the business thoroughly, I went to my banker, Mr. Felsenthal, senior member of the firm of Felsenthal, Gross and Miller, on La Salle Street, who informed me that for every dollar I invested in the business, up to the sum of five thousand dollars, he would lend me an equal amount.

I rented a basement on Halsted Street, ordered the necessary tools, paints and materials, hired a few distant relatives of Henry's wife — and we began to manufacture children's iron beds. When the first little bed was finished, I took pictures of it and went to the various department stores, namely Marshall Field's, The Fair, the Boston Store and Carson Pirie Scott & Company. Each store gave me orders and encouraged me to go ahead.

I immediately incorporated the business under the name of the Horwich Bed Manufacturing Company, and invested more money. We rented a three-story building on Chicago Avenue, and Henry began manufacturing beds of all sizes, while I continued to do the selling. I began to make plans to give up my bottle business and become a member of the concern, and engage actively with my brother in the manufacture of beds, enlarging the plant. I had visions of developing a great business in a few years.

To my disappointment, however, things took a different turn. When we had been in business for about four months and had sold a great many beds to various concerns, I was called in by The Fair. The head of the furniture department informed me that out of fifteen of our beds which they had sold, eight had come back, and they were afraid the others would also be returned. The reason for this, he said, was that the beds were made of thin wrought iron and joined together with lead and were therefore hardly strong enough to support even one person, and certainly not more. I was surprised to hear this, but he showed me where the beds were bent, and where some of them had broken away from the joints. He admitted he had been badly mistaken in buying them, and remarked: "I am afraid you know nothing about the business." The next day I received a similar complaint from Marshall Field and Company.

I was now beset by many worries. I owed the bank a thousand dollars, had three thousand dollars of my own in the business, and in addition, had borrowed several hundred dollars from David. I discussed all this with Henry, but he became excited and insisted that the beds were right, and that he could make them no other way. No amount of persuasion or argument could convince him to change his method of manufacture.

As a last resort, I appealed to a friend of mine, Abe Davis, a nephew of my good friend, Mr. Goldstein, and the son of the Mrs. Davis whom I met on my first day in Chicago. A fine, sensible, Americanized young man, he ran a small haberdashery on Halsted Street, near Roosevelt Road, opposite the basement shop where we had started the business, and he had often watched Henry at work. He was interested in the business and believed that it was only necessary to improve on the method of manufacturing the beds in order to make the venture a profitable one.

So sure was he of this, that he offered to sell out his own business and come in with us.

I was reluctant to let him do this, for fear he might suffer a great loss thereby, and insisted that he investigate the matter thoroughly. Mr. Davis was determined, however, and within the next few weeks he sold his business, realizing enough money to embark on this new venture, and I turned everything over to him and Henry.

It took Mr. Davis many months to convince Henry that they were making the wrong kind of bed. I am afraid that if he had not been such a fine gentleman, possessing unlimited patience and common sense, both he and my brother would have lost every cent. He secured a man from England, experienced in that line, to instruct them, and this man was made superintendent of the shop. He advised that the beds should not be made of thin iron, but of heavy pipes of a certain size, which should be joined with iron, rather than with melted lead, showed them the various brass fixtures that should go with the beds, and suggested that the painting be done by dipping rather than by hand. Mr. Davis saw to it that these suggestions were acted upon, and withdrawing my investment, I wished them both good luck and returned to my bottle business.

The name of the firm was changed to Davis and Horwich, and it became one of the first iron, brass and metal bed manufacturing firms in the United States. The growth of the concern was remarkable, and they were unable to fill their orders fast enough. They soon had to move into larger quarters, and were making money "hand over fist."

Henry now brought over his family, and they lived in fine style. He was very generous, charitable and well liked by people, but as he became extremely friendly with the relatives of his wife and with other people who came from Odessa, forming their own little group, I and my other brothers did not see very much of him, to our regret.

During this period, Harris also brought over his wife and two little girls from Odessa, and they lived on Canal Street, in the building which housed his bottle business.

My youngest brother, Sam, married Lena Cohen, a sister of Eva, the wife of Brother David, and he, too, got along very nicely.

* * *

Harris had to be guided in business matters by Sam and David, and myself. Although he was a man of brilliant intellect, a student of history, well versed in the arts and sciences, and well informed on all current matters, he did not rate so high as a practical business man.

One day, when I happened to be out of the city, someone suggested to Harris that he ought to get a horse for his business, as it would facilitate deliveries. Wishing to demonstrate his business ability, Harris accordingly bought a horse. When I returned to the city and saw his purchase, I told him that he knew as much about horses as the horses knew about him. He laughed good-naturedly at this gibe.

The horse was the most decrepit animal I had ever seen and simply could not be used. It would have to be disposed of. I telephoned a horse dealer, and when he came over and looked at the beast, standing motionless, with its head hanging almost to the ground and his eyes half shut, he wanted to know what ailed the animal.

Before I had a chance to reply, Harris spoke up. "The reason he keeps his head down," he told the dealer, "is because he is bashful and modest, especially in the presence of a stranger. But if you will show him some friendship and feed him up a little, you will find him to be one of the finest horses in Chicago."

"It is a shame," he continued, "that a horse with his pedigree should suffer the humiliation of working on Canal Street. Do you know what family this horse comes from? You will be surprised to learn that he originates from the 'Rosinante family,' that produced that famous mare known throughout the world as the one on which Don Quixote rode all through his famous exploits. If you will just twist a few colored ribbons in his tail and clean him properly, you can use him to lead the procession of horseback riders in the Democratic campaign that is to take place in a few weeks." Harris was a Republican and did not think very much of the Democratic party.

The poor horse dealer turned to me in amazement and said, "What is the matter with this man? What is he talking about? He is just as loony as the horse looks to be," and he left.

The animal, which had cost $48.00, was sold a few weeks later for $17.00, but not until he had caused a little damage. One morning, my clever brother, Harris, had found him in the barn, unable to get up. He tried to help him up, and during the effort, the horse stamped on his foot, injuring him rather badly. Poor Harris was lamed and could not walk for nearly two months afterward.

Once, when passing Harris' place of business, I stopped in to see him, as was my custom, and found him talking with Rabbi A. R. Levy, who was for many years the spiritual leader of the B'nai Abraham congregation, the members of which had come chiefly from Bohemia and Hungary. Rabbi Levy was a very fine man, and did a great deal of good in the Jewish community.

During their discussion, Dr. Levy asked Harris what he thought of the sermon that he had preached in German on the previous Friday night. He had particularly invited Harris and me to attend those services, because he had planned to speak in German, and we had accepted his invitation. To this question, Harris replied that he had felt very nervous while listening to him, and when the Rabbi asked him why, Harris told him that it was because his

German had sounded as though any second he would start to talk in Yiddish.

Afraid that the Rabbi might be offended by this witticism, I hastily commented that I was sure the reason he had spoken in a "Yiddish-German" was because he felt the congregation would not understand pure German.

While in the office, I noticed a lengthy letter in Hebrew lying on Harris' desk. I asked him about it, and he explained to the Rabbi and me that he had received it from a highly intellectual acquaintance of his in Russia, who was planning to come to America. The writer was seeking Harris' advice as to what was the first thing he should do when he reached New York, and his questions filled many pages. Harris showed us a postcard on which he had written a few brief words in reply.

"The first thing to do," it read, "is not to get yourself run over crossing the streets. The rest will take care of itself."

Harris' wife, who was a very fine woman and a good housekeeper, was very proud of her husband, and always had amusing stories to tell of him. While riding home on the street car one evening, she told us, he got off at the wrong street. This sort of thing happened to him quite often, as he was usually so completely engrossed in his thoughts that he was oblivious to external matters. He saw Caesar, Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Bismarck, Disraeli, Shakespeare, Heine, Boerne, Goethe, Schiller, Herzl, Bialik, Ahad-Ha-am and Sokolow, but did not recognize people sitting next to him.

On this occasion, his wife, by chance, coming from a grocery store, met him wandering around like a lost child. When he saw her, he shouted with joy.

"I am glad that I met you here," he exclaimed, "as I want to ask you where you live."

The poor woman became frightened. She thought there was something wrong with him.

"What is the matter with you? Why do you ask that?" she queried.

"It so happens," he responded, "that I live in the same house that you do, and I have forgotten where it is."

He used to call her on the telephone several times a day. Once when I stopped in, he was in the telephone booth, talking to her, and I overheard some of his conversation.

"Guess," he said, "who was here this morning."

He finally told her: "Your cousin from St. Louis. Now guess what he has brought with him." After a pause, I heard him say:

"No, no, not that — something else."

Finally he said: "He brought with him stomach trouble."

Another time I heard him tell his wife about the great bargain he had discovered on Maxwell Street.

"For eight cents," he said, "I bought a tea glass so big that when I drink two glasses of tea, it equals three, and so one glass is clear profit."

One afternoon I received a call to hurry to the police station, as Brother Harris was there, under arrest! Though I was sure it could not be anything serious, I was very much disturbed, and went at once.

When I arrived, I learned from the desk sergeant that two charges had been lodged against him. One was that he kept boxes containing bottles on the sidewalk in front of his place, thus obstructing part of the passageway; and the other was that he tried to get funny with the policeman. Harris had told the officer that the reason he placed the boxes outside was because the wooden sidewalk at that spot had many holes, and in some places the nails were sticking out. Therefore, he kept those parts covered to protect pedestrians from stumbling and getting hurt. For this service that he was rendering to the city, he said, he could demand compensation, but would not do so if the policeman would let him alone.

When they brought Harris from his cell, after I signed a bail bond, he had a book with him, as usual.

"There must be something wrong with that officer," he said indignantly to the desk sergeant. "First he interfered in my business, and now he interferes with my reading a book." He had been reading one of the works of Schopenhauer in the cell, and was annoyed because when the policeman came to take him out, he would not wait until Harris finished his chapter.

The next morning the case came up in the Police Court and was dismissed. In rendering his decision, the judge remarked that the only offense involved was that the defendant had not been permitted to finish the chapter.

We finally secured a partner for Harris by the name of S. Yaffe. They were together for about a year and then separated. Some years later, Harris joined David and Sam in business. I was able to lease for them a big three-story frame building for a very reasonable rental and the three brothers continued together in the bottle business on Canal Street, under the firm name of Horwich Brothers, until the end of their lives.

About the year 1905 I learned that a bottle concern in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, by the name of William Franzen & Son, contemplated selling out. I proposed to my brothers forming a combination between Chicago and Milwaukee, and as they approved of that idea, I bought out the Franzen company. Our youngest brother, Sam, thereupon moved to Milwaukee with his family, to operate the business there. Everything went smoothly, my brothers doing a nice business with the Chicago and Milwaukee brewers, as well as those of neighboring states.

* * *

When we five brothers were comparatively well settled, we received a surprise present from our oldest brother, Aron, who lived in Woronowo, a small town formerly a part of Russia and now belonging to Poland. The present was in the form of his thirteen-year-old boy, Philip, a good-looking youngster. He was rather clever for his age and possessed the characteristics of his grandparents — that is, our parents. Like his grandfather, he was sensible, systematic, mild-mannered and honest. At the same time, he exhibited some of the traits of his grandmother, being also restless, somewhat pessimistic and worried about the future.

Philip went to live with Harris and had there a very good home. We wanted to see that he got some kind of education, but he was not satisfied to devote all his time to study. He was willing, he said, to study in the evening, but wanted to do some practical work during the day. It was rather difficult to find employment for a thirteen-year-old boy, who was "green" and who was rather small for his age, and this made him very unhappy. With tears in his eyes, he often cried to me: "I want to make my own living!" He did not want to be a "charity boarder" even with an uncle.

"I must get something to do," he said, "as it makes me sick and I cannot sleep nights."

One evening, when I was at the home of Brother Harris, he kept whining, "Why did I come here to be so miserable? I wish that the ship that brought me over had been sunk before she landed."

His aunt, Hinde Sarah, who was an exceptionally fine woman, went over to him, and patting him on the head, begged him to stop talking such nonsense.

"You are only a little boy," she said. "Be what you are. You have a good home. We will do everything for you. Do not consider yourself a grown man, or a stranger here. You know that you are very welcome in our house."

However, Philip still insisted that he should be able to make his own living, and that the ship that brought him over was to be blamed for his unhappiness, because it did not sink in mid-ocean and thus spare him all this misery.

Finally his Uncle Harris spoke up.

"Philip," he said, "I think you are right, and I do not blame you for feeling as desperate as you do. I agree with you that it would have been a whole lot better if you had sunk in mid-ocean with the ship, and thus your troubles would have ended then and there. But," he added, "it is not too late, and I can remedy the matter for you in a much better way. If the steamer had been sunk on your account, it would have been a great calamity to the relatives and friends of a large number of other people. You told me that there were over six hundred passengers on that boat, and all of them would have lost their lives because of you. That wouldn't be right. Do you agree with me?"

"Yes, you are right," answered Philip.

"Well, then," Harris continued, "I will tell you what I can do for you. It is only a ten-minute walk from here to the lake. Tomorrow evening we will walk over there. I know a fine place where the water is clean and deep. I will tie a heavy stone around your neck and throw you in. Then you will be satisfied, and the six hundred people who came over with you on the steamer, and their relatives and friends, will also be satisfied."

We all started laughing, and little Philip laughed too, for he couldn't help himself. What amused us was that Harris had spoken in such a serious manner that one might almost think he meant what he said. After that, Philip stopped complaining and wishing he had gone down with the steamer.

Shortly thereafter, he found for himself a position with Lyon Brothers, a wholesale merchandise concern. For several months he worked there for three dollars a week, and when they noticed how willing and ambitious he was, they raised his salary to five dollars, then to eight dollars, and finally to ten dollars a week. He stayed with them long enough to save up around a hundred dollars.

In some way, he learned about a little village in Kentucky, named Josephine, with a population of about sixty families, which he was advised would be a good place for a business venture. His firm agreed to give him four hundred dollars' worth of credit, provided I would be responsible for at least two hundred dollars. I signed an agreement to that effect, and Philip left to become a business man in Josephine.

A few years later, I went there to visit him, and found he had a store in the house where he lived, with about two thousand dollars' worth of merchandise. The stock consisted of so many different items that it might have been termed a little department store. There were groceries, hardware, men's furnishings, notions, women's apparel, and so forth, and everything was arranged in a clean and orderly manner. He ran it all alone, except that on Saturdays he had a girl from the house where he lived help him.

There were about half a dozen farmers sitting around the stove, smoking and gossiping. When I was introduced to them, they told me how much they thought of Philip. One of them said to me: "You must be a very nice man, judging by the fine nephew you have."

They told me that they relied upon him for everything. "We trust him and he trusts us," remarked one of the men. "When he needs money, we get together and lend it to him. And when we need money, he lends it to us. Isn't that right, Philip?"

"Sure," Philip replied. "But now I don't need any money, and I hope I won't have to trouble you any more for any."

I stayed on for two days, and was very happy to see how nice the people were to him, and what an able, sensible boy my brother's son was.

I told my brothers about it when I returned. Judging from the way the residents of Josephine talked, I remarked, there were, in the language of the lawyer, two parties in the State of Kentucky — one was the "party of the first part," that is, the people of Kentucky; and the other was the "party of the second part," who was Philip Horwich, of Woronowo.

A few years later, I received a sudden call from him to come at once — that he was in trouble. He did not explain what the trouble was. I left immediately, feeling very disturbed. I was thinking of the predicament of a Jewish boy all alone among all those simple, uneducated farmers, who could be easily prejudiced and aroused. I feared that perhaps they suspected him of something terrible, and that whether they were right or wrong, he would be in for some serious trouble.

On my arrival, I found, to my great relief, that the situation was not so bad. It seems he had become involved in an accusation of breach of promise. The girl who lived in the same house he did claimed that he had promised to marry her; that she had fallen in love with him, and that now she had found out that he was not going to keep his promise. There was no other accusation. Philip insisted that he had never made such a promise, and had never asked the girl to marry him. But she kept on telling him that she felt they would make a fine match.

It took me about six days to straighten out the matter. I had to use a great deal of diplomacy. On the one side were the girl, her parents and two husky brothers; and on the other side, the little Jewish boy, helpless and alone.

I first won over the mother, then the father and then the brothers. The brothers were the most obstinate.

"We like Philip," they said, "and think a great deal of him, but we cannot permit him to break our sister's heart. Even if he did not make an actual promise, he permitted her to fall in love with him, and he ought to marry her."

I finally was able to convince them that their sister, a big, husky American girl, could never be happy with a little Jewish foreign-born husband. Their religion, personal characteristics and modes of living were so far apart that they would never be able to get along. I explained that, at best, they could only claim monetary damages, for breach of promise, and since Philip absolutely denied making any promise, they ought to be reasonable. They finally decided to leave it to my sense of justice, and the matter was settled for five hundred dollars, half to be paid in cash and half in installments.

Philip saw no reason why this money should be paid, since he was entirely innocent, but I convinced him this would be the wisest way to handle the situation, in order to keep the good-will of the community.

Some time later, several of Philip's brothers came to America. One of them, Julius, joined him in his business, and they worked together for about a year, after which Philip turned the business over to his brother for liquidation and came to Chicago. He subsequently opened a store in Elkhart, Indiana, where he developed a big business and became one of the town's first citizens. He was a member of the Chamber of Commerce and a stockholder in a bank, and was admired and respected by all who knew him. Philip married and had two fine children, Irving and Adeline. His wife, Anna, a very able woman, was a great help to him in his business.

One day we were horrified by terrible news we received over the telephone from Elkhart — that our Philip had suddenly dropped dead. It was a sad blow to us, and to his many friends. His funeral was attended by the most prominent people of the community, and the local newspapers printed his picture together with a long article describing his splendid qualities.

* * *

A short time after Philip came to America, he was followed by his sister, Hannah, then about sixteen years old, and a very sweet and charming girl. She was employed by me for several years, and then married a young man named Louis Freeman, who also was in my employ.

We were next pleased to receive Philip's oldest brother, Abram Herz, with his wife, Frieda, and their two children. Frieda was a very fine and clever woman and got along with everybody in the family.

My brothers and I started Abram out in the restaurant business, in which he continued for several years. It was in his restaurant that a banquet was held for the internationally known Zionist, Schmarya Levin, when the latter visited Chicago. The affair was attended by the most prominent Jews in Chicago, including such men as Julius Rosenwald and A. G. Becker.

After a few years, Abram had to give up the restaurant, as the character of the neighborhood changed. He went into the insurance business, and is still in that line. A few years ago, his wife suddenly took sick and passed away. She was deeply mourned, and her loss was a great tragedy to the family.

Abram has since married his cousin, Minnie, the daughter of my brother, Henry, who is a very fine woman.

Abram had spent most of his younger days in Jewish schools of learning and had become quite a scholar. He is sincere and honest, always a gentleman and well liked. His Talmudic training, however, with its complex and involved methods of reasoning, makes it difficult sometimes to carry on a discussion with him.

As an illustration of this, I recall a discussion as to whether or not it was wise for some of the high government officials of the United States to criticize and attack Hitler for the mistreatment of the Jews. Some people felt that they should not do so, because they would thereby offend the Hitler government, who would retaliate by further persecution of the Jews.

To this probability, Abram Herz replied: "After all, throughout the history of the world, Jews have been persecuted everywhere and made to suffer, and they are used to it."

This reminds me of a story concerning a fishwife and a Rabbi. The Rabbi noticed that the woman took a fish from a tank and proceeded to cut it up while it was still alive and flapping. He reproached her for this, saying that it was inhuman, and that she should not cut up the fish until it was dead. To this the fishwife casually replied: "Oh, that is all right. I have been doing this for years. The fish are already used to it!"

Abram Herz is the father of three brilliant daughters — Rose and Celia, who are married, and Bertha, who is working for the Government.

* * *

In the year 1893, when Chicago was just getting ready for the opening of the World's Columbian Exposition, my brothers and I were chatting together over our tea one day, when Sam, the youngest, proposed that each of us contribute his share, according to his means, for the purpose of bringing our father here for a visit. We all accepted the idea with great enthusiasm, and within a week, a ticket from Wilno to Chicago, together with the necessary money for additional expenses, was on the way to our father.

For the six weeks that preceded his arrival, our thoughts and words centered upon the phrase, "Father comes!"— just as had been the case during our childhood days in Poniemon.

When we went to meet him at the station, our happiness was unbounded, but our enthusiasm was dampened a little by his appearance. We had forgotten that his clothes would not be like our American clothes, and were startled to see him in the typical garments of the small-town Lithuanian Jew. He wore a funny cap and an outlandish long garment, and he looked older than we had anticipated. He was then seventy-two years old, and looked it.

We immediately ushered him into a carriage and brought him to Harris' house. David was selected as the "stylist," to take Father in hand and "doll him up." Harris humorously suggested a "beard cut" immediately, and David took him to a barber shop, where his beard and hair were becomingly trimmed. He then took him to a haberdashery, and had him outfitted in a new suit, shirt, tie and shoes.

When we all gathered together again that evening, we beheld an entirely different-looking man. The change was astonishing. He looked years younger, and we were overjoyed at his fine appearance. We were glad to find, too, that he was the same good-hearted, honest, optimistic and contented person we had remembered him to be.

Father was beaming with happiness at seeing his sons and their families. We arranged to have him meet his grandchildren singly, placing him in a separate room and bringing them to him one at a time. I can hardly describe his joy at this. He told us that he wished he were a poet, so that he could describe the beauty of the scene, and how beautiful the children looked as they came in, especially two of them, he said, who looked like little angels. He would not tell us which ones he referred to, however, so that there would be no jealousy among us. We learned later that he had pronounced the well known Hebrew blessing over the head of each child in turn.

We made various plans for entertaining him. At first, we decided we would all meet every evening at Harris' home, but later changed the meeting place each evening, so that each of us might have a chance to have him at our home. Twice a week, one of us would take him out riding in a carriage, and show him the city — the parks, the lake, and so forth; and every few days he would write to Mother, telling her of his happiness and of the wonders of America. He even learned a little English, and one time ventured out by himself for a walk in Lincoln Park. He bought some apples and bananas for lunch, and sat down on a bench and began to eat. It wasn't long, he told us, before some little boys, with mischievous ideas, decided to have fun with him — but Father took a few pennies from his pocket and threw them quite a distance from the place where he was sitting. Away went the children to find them, forgetting about him.

Among other things, we took him many times to the World's Fair, and he was very greatly impressed with the wonders that he saw there.

Father was with us for that entire summer, and there was hardly a day that our love and respect for him did not increase. He had such a fine character and such good sense, and was so mild, and so grateful for every little thing that was done for him.

Father had a sincere belief in God. Though very religious, he was liberal-minded and was always ready to defend those who were not as pious as he. In defense of Reformed Judaism, he often quoted the German saying: "Neue voegel, neue lieder" (new birds, new songs).

"The world keeps changing from one generation to another," he would say. "We have to expect that ceremonies and traditions in religion must also change."

The main thing, he felt, was that Jews should know they were Jews, that they should believe in God, and that they should be good, honest and charitable.

We were anxious to bring Mother here also, so that she and Father could make this country their permanent home. To our disappointment, however, we learned that Mother's state of health was such that she could not travel, and that it would be unwise for her to undertake the trip to the United States.

At one of our family gatherings, after the High Holidays, Father said that he felt like Jacob in the Bible, except that Jacob had twelve sons, while he had six.

"It is wonderful to be with you," he said, "but the time has come for me to leave. My heart is filled with gratefulness and thanks to God that He has let me live and has given me the joy of being with you in this great, free country. But Mother is

Author and Family at Passover "Seder"

alone and lonesome, and her health is not too good, so it is best that I return home now."

It was decided that one of us should accompany him to New York and see him off on the boat, and I was selected for that honor. We spent about eight days in New York, and I then saw him off on his steamer, the Crown Prince von Preussen. Before the boat sailed, I inspected his cabin and arranged with the steward to give him Kosher food, see he had everything he needed and look after his comfort generally. To insure that this would be done, I handed the steward a generous sum of money, and instructed Father how much to tip him when they reached Hamburg.

Standing on the dock as the ship was about to sail, I saw my father wiping his eyes with his handkerchief. Just as the whistle blew and the boat began to move, he shouted to me: "Yevorechecho!" (May God bless you and protect you).

As the ship slowly moved away, I remained standing there, feeling that I was taking leave of one of the best friends that God can give a man.

We learned later, from people who came over, and from friends who wrote us, that the whole town was agog over his appearance and his fine clothes, and listened eagerly to his description of the greatness of America and his tales of how well he was treated by his sons and their families, and others. Friends and relatives who came to Chicago five years later, told us that Father was still talking about his trip to Chicago, and the wonders of America.

* * *

Gradually my home became a meeting place for the intellectuals who came to Chicago, and we used to entertain groups of five or six such men at least three or four times a week. Harris, as a rule, was the leader in the discussions that took place, and we thus spent many enjoyable and stimulating evenings.

There were among them men of various types, all very interesting. Prominent in the group was Mr. Zolotkoff, whom I have already mentioned. A gentleman in every respect, he was as a rule easy-going and mild-mannered, although in his writing he was sometimes extremely harsh. It was a treat to be in his company and listen to his arguments and reasoning. He was well informed on almost every subject, always made himself clear, and generally what he said was right.

An entirely different type was a Mr. La Mark, a young Russian Jew, recently arrived from Paris, France. In addition to English, he spoke German, French and Russian. No one knew what his business was. Although quite intelligent, he was disagreeable in an argument. He would not speak to the point, but would get excited and liked to exaggerate and to bluff. He would become very angry about anything that he did not like, and was an habitual complainer. Harris once told him that there are some people who do not believe in the saying, "Live and let live."

"You, Mr. La Mark," he said, "not only do not believe in 'live and let live,' but you also do not believe in 'bluff and let bluff.' "

Mr. La Mark remained in Chicago for a number of years, and then disappeared. Twenty-odd years later I ran into him on Frederick Street, in Berlin, Germany, and we spent an evening together. He was reticent as ever about his personal affairs, and to this day I do not know what his occupation was.

Another and very unusual type among these intellectuals was Mr. Peter Wiernik. A student and a scholar, he was well read and the possessor of a good memory. A noted Jewish writer, he was a hard worker and honest in thought, speech and action. However, he was of an extremely stubborn nature, with fixed ideas about almost everything, and once he spoke his mind, no one could make him change it, no matter what evidence or arguments were presented.

He was a great proponent of Orthodoxy for the Jews and Catholicism for the Christians, and absolutely refused to consider any variation of these two religions, such as the Conservative or Reformed elements in Judaism and the Protestant groups in Christianity. He always maintained that Jewish Orthodoxy and Christian Catholicism would remain and all the other types of religion would disappear.

Strangely enough, he himself was not associated with any religious organizations. He never attended services in any church or synagogue, and was not a member of any religious group — neither did he ever pray or claim any religion for himself. But he admired the people who did believe, and who did pray.

Harris remarked about Mr. Wiernik that he was like one who considered himself an expert shot. He knew how to handle a gun, how to load it, and how to shoot it — but he seldom hit the mark.

However, in spite of the fact that we could never agree on religious and political problems, we were the best of friends. Whenever Mr. Wiernik was in need of anything, or wanted my advice or assistance, I was happy to be of help to him. After he gave up or lost his position as a writer for the Daily Jewish Courier, I created a job for him in my business, and for more than two years he was on my payroll as a "resource man," which was a sinecure. This helped to carry him along until he secured a position in his own profession, in New York, with the Jewish Morning Journal. During the many years he lived in that city, I never failed to spend half days and evenings with him when I visited New York, and we had endless discussions and arguments on many, many subjects.

Unfortunately, a situation later arose which marred our friendship. In the year 1919, I was elected as one of three commissioners to go to Europe, particularly to Poland, to distribute food, clothing and money to the poor and needy who had suffered through the World War.

About a year after I returned, Mr. Wiernik informed me that he had heard that while I was in Europe on this relief mission (of which I will speak again later on), I had done some private work in connection with my business in Chicago, and he asked me whether or not this was true. I assured him that it was not true, but he insisted that I write him a letter denying the charge. The reason he gave for asking me to do this was to have his conscience clear about me. I wanted to show him that I could be as stubborn as he was, and refused to give him a written statement, feeling that he should have considered my word sufficient. I was later confidentially informed by a friend that it was because of my refusal to give him this written statement that he omitted mentioning my name in his book, entitled "The History of the Jews in America." Another reason for the omission, I was told, was that I did not agree with Mr. Wiernik concerning the importance of a certain institution, to which he had requested that I contribute a considerable sum.

Another interesting character who came to my home was a Mr. Yaffe, who was small and dark-complexioned. He was a Talmudist and Hebrew scholar, and knew Russian and German perfectly. The possessor of a most remarkable memory, he acquired a knowledge of the English language in six months. Coming to New York without any knowledge of English, it took him six months to memorize Webster's Dictionary. After that he could quote by heart every word in the book! We tested his phenomenal memory many, many times, and "believe it or not," he could give the full description and meaning of any word mentioned to him, just as it was printed in Webster's.

At this time, he was not doing anything in particular and had to depend upon his friends for his sustenance. I decided to introduce him to Dr. Emil G. Hirsch. I described to Dr. Hirsch his excellent qualifications, and then took Mr. Yaffe to see him. They became great friends, and Dr. Hirsch engaged him to explain the deeper meanings of the argumentations and disputations of the Rabbis in the Talmud, paying him fifteen dollars a week for his companionship as a student.

In view of Dr. Hirsch's former antagonism towards the West Side Jews, I considered it quite an accomplishment that he had arrived at the point where he would study the Talmud side by side with a Russian Jew.

At these informal gatherings of intellectuals in my home, every imaginable subject was discussed, including politics, religion, philosophy, science, books, and domestic and world affairs — in fact, everything except what immediately concerned the material welfare of the men themselves. All these brilliant individuals had to struggle for their daily bread, and could hardly make enough to get along — but their hardships were temporarily forgotten during those long, delightful evenings of brilliant and stimulating discussion.

* * *

Whenever and wherever the early West Side intellectuals assembled and for whatever reason, they never failed to end up by discussing the two paramount Jewish questions. These questions I am afraid will never be answered. The first one is — What makes a man a Jew; is it religion, race or nationality? The second question, which always followed discussion of the first, was — Who is the genuine Jew, the Orthodox or the Reformed? (The Conservative group, which has since been formed, did not exist in those days.)

These two problems were the burning issues in the days gone by, and they are still strongly debated and discussed. The Reformed Jews seem generally to hold that one is a Jew only because of the religion he practices, and not because of nationality, claiming that the Jews are not a nation. The Orthodox, on the other hand, appear to take the position that a Jew is unalterably a member of the Jewish nation, and the orthodox Jew must have faith both in the Jewish nationality and in the Jewish religion.

To my mind, the Reformed Jews have had the best of the argument. I have observed since childhood that a Jew is recognized as such by his fellow Jews only as long as he adheres to his faith, whether he is Reformed, Orthodox or Conservative. As soon as he officially gives up the Jewish religion and adopts Christianity, he is read out by his own people from all Jewish communities everywhere.

It is well known that if one were a skeptic, or an unbeliever, refusing to conform to the Jewish traditions, ceremonies and prayers, he was considered a bad, irreligious Jew — but still a Jew, and a member of the Jewish community. But the minute he became a convert to another religion, even though he believed in Jewish nationality, he was ostracized from every Jewish group.

The fact that Hitler mistreats converted Jews just as he does those who have not adopted Christianity proves nothing. He also mistreats Socialists and Communists, whether they are Jews or not. He even oppresses and persecutes Catholics and Protestants, nuns and clergymen. He is more brutal towards the Jews, accusing them of being his enemies and of being responsible for the boycott against German goods, so that he may use these excuses to rob them of their property and possessions. For two thousand years, Jews were persecuted by various governments and peoples for no other reason than their religion. In these instances, they were generally given the alternative, to become Christians or die. There was never a question of nationality or race. It was the faith of Israel that was attacked.

When the Jews finally will have Palestine as their own country, and a large enough number of Jews will live there; when they will have their own government and will adopt and speak one language and be recognized by the nations of the world as a Jewish Nation, then the Jew who wishes to do so may become a member of the Jewish Nation. But at present, this is not true.

Palestine now can survive only with the good will of other nations as a place of refuge for homeless Jews.

Thirty or forty years ago, the two questions I have mentioned were discussed much more frequently than they are now. The debates would often last for hours, and would sometimes cause unpleasant misunderstandings, as much strong feeling was exhibited. However, it was an intellectual pleasure to listen to the various arguments, presented by those brilliant thinkers — men like Mr. Zolotkoff, Mr. Wiernik, Mr. Yaffe, my brother Harris, Mr. Dolnitzky, Dr. Kadison, and others of understanding and learning. Their discussions were stimulating, interesting and informative. It seems one no longer encounters men of this type. In recent years, when such questions have been discussed, the arguments I have heard have been silly and meaningless.

As an illustration, I recall a discussion on the subject of Reformed and Orthodox Jewry that took place in a restaurant on the West Side some six or seven years ago. I was invited to join a group of five or six men sitting at one of the tables. Two of them were on the side of Reformed Judaism, while the others all expressed themselves as against Reformed Judaism, Reformed Jews, and especially Reformed Rabbis. One of the latter made this statement:

"I have no use for any Reformed Rabbi," he said, "but I have a special grudge against Rabbi Gerson B. Levi."

I asked him why, and he gave the following answer: "A man like him, who knows Hebrew well and can wade through pages of the Talmud and is also not a stranger in the Midrash, the Rambam and other commentaries on the Bible in the original — a man like that should be a real Rabbi, an Orthodox Rabbi, and not play around with Reformed Judaism. He possesses too much learning not to be an Orthodox Rabbi!"

Being a member of the K. A. M. Reformed Temple, of which Dr. Solomon B. Freehof was at that time the Rabbi, I was interested to know what the speaker would have to say about my Rabbi, for whom I had the greatest respect and admiration. To my query, he glibly replied:

"Well, of course you cannot expect a Reformed Rabbi to know what he is talking about! But I will say this much for him — he speaks very well and quite interestingly, and sometimes he pretty nearly says something. He has a very good mind and speaks Yiddish well, and if he had studied the Talmud for a few years, he could have been an Orthodox Rabbi and a good one at that. But now he is no better and no worse than any other Reformed Rabbi, who is destroying traditional Judaism."

The two Rabbis mentioned, as it happens, were two of the foremost spiritual leaders of Chicago. Rabbi Levi, who was a true scholar and gentleman, passed away not long ago, and Rabbi Freehof, who is considered to be one of the best minds in the country, was called to a temple in Pittsburgh. Happily, he was succeeded here by a young Rabbi, who is an earnest student and a man of considerable learning, namely, Rabbi Joshua Loth Liebman.

Reformed Judaism was originally represented in Chicago only by Rabbis who were German Jews. Of these, Dr. Hirsch was first and foremost. Then came Dr. Joseph Stolz, Rabbi Tobias Schanfarber, Dr. Gerson B. Levi, Rabbi Abraham Hirschberg, Rabbi Felix Levy, and others. Dr. Hirsch was later succeeded by the eminent scholar and lecturer, Dr. Louis L. Mann.

The early Orthodox Rabbis in Chicago were, besides Rabbis Anixter, Lesser and Budzinski, whom I have already mentioned, Ephraim Epstein, Azriel Epstein, Eleazer Muskin, A. S. Braude, Saul Silber and Benjamin A. Daskal, the latter being the first Orthodox Rabbi in Chicago of American birth and schooling.

In those days, no one could ever imagine that the time would come when men of Russian and Lithuanian birth or parentage, with Orthodox backgrounds and speaking perfect Yiddish, would become Reformed Rabbis — so great was the gulf between the two groups. Nor did anyone conceive that the time would come when Reformed Rabbis would support the Zionist movement. From the start, these German-Jewish Reformed Rabbis were anti-Zionists, while the Orthodox Rabbis, on the other hand, although at first indifferent, afterward strongly advocated Zionism.

Yet the impossible occurred — and we now have many Reformed Rabbis who either were born in Russia or are of Russian parentage, some of them outstanding in their field. In this category, among others, are Rabbis Solomon B. Freehof, Joshua Loth Liebman, Louis Binstock, Jacob Singer, Felix Mendelsohn and George Fox, who is president of the Chicago Rabbinical Association, a Reformed group.

The closer relationship which now exists between the Reformed and Orthodox groups has been brought about largely through the influence of Orthodox Rabbis with a modern outlook. In our city, much credit is due, in this connection, to Rabbis Saul Silber, Ephraim Epstein, Eleazer Muskin, and others, who founded the well known Hebrew Theological College, the second institution of its kind in the country. Though an Orthodox institution, it adopted modern methods of instruction. Many of its graduates took the middle course, becoming Conservative Rabbis, and they gradually developed a better understanding between the two distinct elements, drawing them closer together.

Although the heavy demands of their profession have occupied most of the time of the various Rabbis I have mentioned, I am pleased to say that they have also found time and energy to devote to Zionism, as well as all the other philanthropic institutions and welfare organizations which I have mentioned in this book.

* * *

Among the many plans submitted by Jewish leaders, in relation to the Jewish question, was an interesting one suggested by Mr.

Adolf Kraus, who was a prominent lawyer, well known among both Jews and non-Jews.

He felt that too many Jews emigrating from Europe to the United States, especially those from the eastern countries, were settling at the landing points, such as New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, where they became peddlers or engaged in various petty businesses in the overcrowded Jewish sections. He feared that this condition would in time antagonize the non-Jews and intensify anti-Semitism, and conceived the idea of controlling this immigration.

Mr. Kraus invited Mr. Ginzburg, the publisher of the Daily Jewish Courier, and myself, to discuss and outline his plan. His object was to create a central organization, with branches in the larger Jewish communities throughout the country. Its purpose would be to induce immigrants not to segregate and crowd into overfilled centers, but to spread out, so that there would not be too many Jews in the large cities. Especially was he interested in having them go to Brazil, Mexico, Cuba and other of the smaller countries, so that thus scattered about, they would not become too conspicuous.

When Mr. Kraus sought our opinion, I proposed that we call a conference in Chicago of the leading Jews in the United States to discuss the matter, with which suggestion Mr. Ginzburg was in accord. Personally, I told him, I did not understand how such a plan could be accomplished, and doubted whether it should be attempted at that time.

Two months later, we were invited to a meeting downtown, at which Mr. Kraus' proposition was to be discussed. Harris was interested and came with me. Leading Jews of America, from about fifteen states, were present.

Mr. Kraus read a lengthy report and submitted his plan for inducing immigrants to settle elsewhere than in the United States. He particularly suggested Cuba, as it was not far and there were few Jews there. That country, he stated, provided an opportunity for many Jews to live in comfort, and even prosperity.

The plan was debated for hours, and finally someone made a motion for its adoption, and for the appointment of a committee to work out the details. When the vote was about to be taken, I was surprised to hear Harris ask for the floor. Although he knew English sufficiently well to enable him to read and write satisfactorily, he spoke it poorly, having a very bad accent. This was not the type of group to whom he could speak in Yiddish.

I tugged at his sleeve, to get him to sit down, but Dr. Hirsch, who sat nearby, said: "Let him alone. We want to hear from a man of his type."

So Harris began, speaking in the sing-song manner of the Talmudic student, and this was his argument:

"Immigrants who come to the United States," he said, "as a rule have relatives or friends here who will advise, guide and assist them in every way. If they do not learn the language for a while, they can converse in their own language, and in a short time they feel at home. But, if you send them to Cuba or to Mexico, where they have no friends or relatives, and where the language is a mixture of Spanish and Latin, which is more difficult than English, and where the countries are very poor, they will be a great deal more miserable there, than they were in the countries from which they came.

"I would make this suggestion. I would say that for every immigrant who comes to New York, let one of you gentlemen send your son or your friend's son away to Cuba, and let the immigrant remain here to take his place. Your sons or brothers or relatives are already well-to-do. They know the language and are Americanized, and they can help themselves a hundred times better in Cuba or Mexico than can the poor, forlorn, bewildered immigrant who comes from a small town in Poland or Russia.

"For example, Mr. Kraus, I understand, has several sons. He is well-to-do, and they are Americans. Let Mr. Kraus send his sons to Cuba, and in their place take in the same number of greenhorns, and in that way both countries and both sides will benefit."

Harris' manner of expression, his gesticulations and Talmudic sing-song were so humorous that Dr. Hirsch and the other men present could not help but smile. But Harris continued:

"A poor immigrant hopes and waits for the time when he will reach New York or Chicago, so that he can escape poverty and oppression, and meet his well-to-do relatives and friends, with whom he can talk for weeks about his 'landsmen,' and tell all kinds of interesting stories. Just then one of Mr. Kraus' representatives will say to him, 'You cannot stay in the United States, because you will be too much for us. You must go to Cuba.'

"Supposing you had the power to enforce this, can you imagine how inhuman that would be? But you cannot enforce it, and the relatives of the immigrant will be right when they answer, 'You send your son to Mexico, and he will stay here.' What will you answer them, and how can you accomplish it?"

Dr. Hirsch was following every word, and nodded in approval of everything Harris said. When he finished, Dr. Hirsch broke into applause, smiling and chuckling.

The folly of the plan thus exposed, someone made a motion to postpone the matter indefinitely, and that was the end of that great undertaking.

Mr. Kraus devoted a great deal of his time and ability to promote the welfare of the Jews in this city and elsewhere, and was one of the foremost representatives of Chicago Jewry to his last day. As a monument to his activities stands the Covenant Club, founded in 1917, while he was serving as international president of B'nai B'rith. The Club has become a center for those interested in the social, cultural, philanthropic and religious life of the city.

Mr. A. B. Seelenfreund, who was for many years secretary of B'nai B'rith, worked hand in hand with Mr. Kraus, not only on this project, but in all movements concerning Jewish welfare.

* * *

There came to Chicago a great and famous European Rabbi, known by the name of Ridvoz. He was a philosopher and Talmudic scholar, and the author of many important books on religion. He delivered several lectures here on the Bible and the Talmud, and a movement was set afoot to engage him to act as Chief Rabbi of Chicago, although he had already received a similar invitation from New York. We already had some fifteen or twenty synagogues in the city, each with its respective Rabbi. A meeting of the leaders of the various synagogues and other well known Jews of the city was called to discuss the proposal. My brother, Harris, and I were invited to attend.

We found that those for and against the proposition were about evenly divided. The floor was given first to those opposed to engaging the Rabbi. Their chief argument was that the appointment would create jealousy and misunderstanding among the other Rabbis and among the officers and leaders of the synagogues, giving rise to quarrels and friction. Since Rabbi Ridvoz was an exceptionally pious and saintly man, they said, he would not be able to bear such unpleasantness. His fine character, they argued, could not endure the strain, and it would undoubtedly undermine his health and perhaps cause his death, for which calamity we would be responsible.

It was apparent that the majority would vote against engaging the Rabbi, when Harris asked to be heard. He reminded the gathering of the greatness of the Rabbi and of the wonderful influence his presence would have on the Orthodox as well as the Reformed Jews of Chicago.

"You are afraid," he then continued, "that there will be so much friction that Rabbi Ridvoz will not stand the strain, and will worry himself to death, and we will be responsible. Well," he stated, "in Chicago we have only about a hundred thousand Jews. There are about seven or eight times as many in New York. The Jews here and in that city have come from the same countries and have lived the same kind of life. So, if it will take a hundred thousand Jews in Chicago six or seven years to worry the Rabbi to death, it will take six or seven hundred thousand Jews in New York only six or seven months to make the Rabbi sick and bring him to his death. Now, the question for us to decide is, what are we to do? Shall we keep him here, where he can live at least seven years, or shall we send him to New York, where he will die in seven months?"

With this delightful logic he won over the group, and it was decided that the Rabbi remain here. The latter served as Chief Rabbi of Chicago for quite a number of years, until he left for Palestine.

One Saturday afternoon, Harris asked me to go with him to visit Rabbi Ridvoz, who then lived on Roosevelt Road (at that time called Twelfth Street), near Halsted. Harris loved to spend time with men of this type whenever possible, and took great delight in carrying on discussions and friendly arguments with them, demonstrating his own wit and knowledge while having a high regard for theirs.

As we approached the Rabbi's home, we saw him coming out. He told us that he was going for a walk, and asked us to accompany him. As we strolled along Roosevelt Road, between Halsted and Desplaines Streets, we came upon a Jewish peddler selling strawberries, shouting his wares at the top of his voice.

Greatly disturbed, the Rabbi stopped and said: "This is one of the greatest crimes that a Jew can commit. To violate the sanctity of the Sabbath in public, in a Jewish neighborhood, is an unforgivable sin. Therefore, I shall have to utter an imprecation upon him."

With his eyes lifted to heaven, he was about to do so, when Harris took hold of his arm, saying:

"Just a minute, dear Rabbi. I know that you are a great scholar in Israel, no doubt greater than a good many in this country and elsewhere. You certainly must know what you are doing. But before you curse that man, let us talk it over.

"If you should see that man riding in a carriage," he went on, "violating the Sabbath for the pleasure of it, and for that reason only, then I would consider him an unpardonable sinner against the Jewish law pertaining to the day of rest, and he would deserve punishment.

"But just look at him. He is poor and ragged, and his horse and wagon look no better than he. If he calls out his wares, I am sure it is not for the purpose of having fun or getting pleasure out of it, but it must be out of necessity. No doubt, the man has a wife and children, and he is compelled to earn some money in order to give them food and clothing — so he should be censured, but not cursed or condemned. And do not forget that your curse is likely to fall upon his innocent wife and children as much as upon himself."

The stately Rabbi listened, and then remarked: "Well, in heaven, among the angels, we have the 'Kateger' (accusing angel), and the 'Sanager' (defending angel), so it seems that it is the will of Providence that you should act as this man's defender. Therefore, I shall not carry out my intention."

As a rule, I remained silent during conversations of this kind, feeling that I was not sufficiently versed in such things to participate. This time, however, I spoke up and offered a suggestion, namely, that I would undertake to find out who the man was, what his circumstances were, and whether or not he was compelled by necessity to violate the Sabbath publicly. The Rabbi agreed that I do this, and said: "For that I shall bless you."

I laughed and said: "I am afraid that I am so loaded with sins that the blessing of even such a great and pious Rabbi as you would not do me any good."

Harris thought this remark very much out of place, but the Rabbi replied: "My blessing may reduce some of your sins."

I inquired about the peddler, and the next day went to his house. I found that he had a wife and three children and that they were very poor and needed every penny he could earn every day in the week. I reported this to the Rabbi, and he thanked me. The blessing, however, was not mentioned.

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While in the bottle business, I made many close friends among the dealers, and having gained their confidence, they would often come to me for opinions and advice, relating to various matters.

One day, a well-established soda water manufacturer of Chicago, Mr. I. Levinson, came to see me. He occupied his own three-story building, constructed for that purpose, on Roosevelt Road (then Twelfth Street), and was doing very well, but wanted to give it up and retire. He wanted advice as to how to go about disposing of it. I advised that such a business would have to be sold just as it stood, in order to yield a satisfactory return, and told him I would try to find a customer who would take it over intact.

In considering possible prospects, I thought of my beloved friend, Mr. Goldstein, with whom I used to live. He was then in the bottle business on Canal Street, with his two boys, and was doing fairly well. Still, I knew that if his sons should marry and have families, the business could not support them all. Accordingly I suggested to Mr. Goldstein that he take over the soda water business of Mr. Levinson, and since I knew he did not have enough capital to do so, I offered to advance him the necessary funds and let him consider me as his partner in the business until the loan was repaid.

He found this to his liking, and within a week, Mr. Goldstein and his sons took over the soda water concern. They did so well that my loan was paid within a short time; in fact, the business progressed to such an extent that Mr. Levinson wanted to buy it back; but this, of course, Mr. Goldstein and his sons refused to consider.

They carried on the business for many years, during which time the sons married. Mr. Goldstein became quite a leader in his circle, and was elected president of his synagogue. The family lived very happily until, alas, Mr. Goldstein suddenly took sick and that was the end. His passing away was one of the losses I felt most keenly. The last time I saw him was at the hospital, two days before he died. Neither he nor anyone else realized his danger, although his illness was quite severe. As was usual with him, he accepted his condition with good-natured resignation.

"After all," he said to me, "we are born to die. It is only a question of when. A few years more or less make no difference, so long as our children are grown up and can take care of themselves."

When I asked him if he was receiving good treatment, he pointed to a nurse who was approaching, and described how sweet and considerate she was to him. When she brought him a drink of water, he was so pleased that he repeatedly praised her for her kindness.

I could not help but think how fortunate is the man who possesses such optimism. Instead of bemoaning his fate, as so many others would have done, Mr. Goldstein kept telling me how nice people were to him and how lucky he was that he could afford to go to a hospital and receive skilled treatment.

"Imagine," he said, "how bad it would be if we did not have such an institution and such fine doctors and nurses."

I was unable to hide my tears, and when I left him, he consoled me, instead of my encouraging him. He assured me that he would be all right in a few weeks and would then be rid of a bad sickness. Two days later, a Rabbi and my brother, Harris, eulogized him in the synagogue and at the cemetery.

Knowing how attached I was to Mr. Goldstein, his family insisted that I also say a few words. I hesitated, afraid that I would be overcome by emotion and break into tears. But, unable to refuse their request, I complied as best I could. I told the large gathering how Mr. Goldstein was the first man in Chicago who received me cordially and with open arms, and under whose roof I found a home, kindness and understanding when I was an utter stranger in a strange land. I told them how his kindness and consideration had made such a deep impression upon me that I would remember it to my last day. I described his fine character, and his marvelous optimism, even when on his deathbed, and how pleased he was with the way people treated him in the hospital. So deeply touched were the mourners that they gave way to weeping and wailing, and I could go no further.

That experience was one of my saddest — to part with a good man and a good friend, who was in the prime of life.

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During the time I lived with the Goldstein family, I became acquainted with a young man by the name of Herman Harrison, a distant relative of Mrs. Goldstein, who came often to visit them. No doubt, his chief reason for coming so frequently was that Anna, the Goldsteins' daughter, was a very good-looking and clever girl. Though both of them were very young, it was not long before they became engaged.

Herman was one of those immigrant boys who had rapidly become Americanized. He spoke and wrote English well, had very fine manners, and was altogether a likable fellow. I was very fond of him, but Mr. Goldstein felt that he was too nice and had "too many manners," and complained to me several times that he acted with "too much dignity."

When I asked Mr. Goldstein to be more explicit, he explained: "At the supper table, he always lifts the plate of bread, or the sugar, or the butter, and offers them to me, asking if I want some."

I asked why he should object to this, and he replied: "This fellow ought to know that this is my house, my table and my food. If I want anything, I will take it. It looks to me very foolish and queer when he takes the bread and asks me if I want some, or the sugar, or anything else."

I explained that Herman was only trying to do the right thing, and Mr. Goldstein, being a very good-natured individual, overlooked these little "faults."

As young Harrison did not consider himself to be in the "greenhorn" class, he refused to engage in peddling or similar enterprises. Instead, he secured a position with Nelson Morris and Company, one of the large packing houses of the city. He worked for a while as assistant bookkeeper, and later became secretary to one of the officers, at a salary of $15.00 a week.

Not long afterward, Anna and Harrison were married. Although in those days, $15.00 a week was looked upon as a fair salary, it still was not enough to live on very comfortably.

Thinking well of both of these young people, and wanting to see them get along, I advised Harrison to try to find some kind of business which he felt he could handle, in which case I would advance the necessary money to get him started, and he would receive a salary and half of the net profit of such an enterprise. A few months after I made this suggestion, he was advised by one of the managers of Marshall Field & Company that it would be profitable to start a neighborhood dry goods store on the Northwest Side. I approved of the idea, invested $5,000.00 and received $3,000.00 credit from Marshall Field & Company, and the store was opened.

The business began to pay almost from the very first day. Herman and his wife both worked very hard, and continued to make money. At the end of a few years, when the assets amounted to much more than what I had invested, I told them that I did not feel it was fair that, with them working so hard, I should get half of the profit, and proposed that I take out my share, in installments, so that they would eventually own the business themselves. Of course, they were very pleased, and in time I drew out my investment, leaving the business to them.

When their children grew up, they also came into the store, and Harrison became a wealthy man. Unfortunately, however, he suffered heavy losses during the depression, which caused his death.

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My business and that of my brothers went fairly well for a time, but soon competition grew keen. When I had first started in the bottle business, there were only two others so engaged — a German Jew by the name of Sanger, and an Irishman, by the name of McLellan. After my brothers and I became established, a good many others followed our example, until there were over forty men dealing in used bottles, in this city.

I felt it advisable, since there were so many, to form an organization of all the bottle dealers, and accordingly called a meeting of a few of the principal dealers to discuss such a project, and work out a plan. Shortly afterward, we called together all the men in our line, and an organization was formed, under the corporate name of the Chicago Bottle Dealers Association, of which I was made president.

Harris was a member of the Association, and I insisted that he attend one of our early meetings — either the second or third, I believe it was. One of the questions under discussion on this occasion was to decide how often we should meet. Some thought that once a month would be sufficient, while others insisted that we should have two meetings a month. I noticed that Harris was, as usual, reading a book and not paying the slightest attention to what was going on. In order to "liven up" the meeting a little, I called on him, in my capacity as chairman, and admonished him that this was a business meeting and not a library. He promptly replied that, although he was not listening to what was going on, he knew that the proceedings were much less important than the book.

"But it is important," I told him. "We must decide upon how often to have meetings. There are two opinions. One group wants to have a meeting once a month, and the others want to have meetings twice a month. What do you think?"

"The best thing," he remarked carelessly, "is to compromise and satisfy both parties. Therefore, I propose that we should have only one meeting, but it should last the whole night." And he went back to his book.

The business in which we were engaged consisted of buying daily large quantities of various types of used bottles, such as milk, soda water, beer, wine and liquor bottles. Some had the owners' names blown into the glass. They were purchased by peddlers from housewives, hotels and stores, along with various kinds of waste material. We would wash and sort the bottles according to size, grade and name. Those without names would be sold to anyone who wanted to buy, while the bottles with names imprinted would, as a rule, be resold to the original owners.

The distributors of the various beverages whose names were blown into the glass, used to charge their customers for the bottles. In doing so, they lost ownership of them; yet whenever they bought the bottles from us, they felt that they were paying for their own property and resented doing so. These different brewers, soda water distributors and milk dealers finally got together. They formed three respective organizations, and engaging a lawyer (a Mr. Cummings) to represent them, they decided to let the courts determine whether or not they were entitled to the return, free of charge, of the bottles bearing their names.

Mr. Cummings discovered an old law, which could be interpreted as in favor of his clients, and the latter thereupon began to annoy the members of our Association with replevin and search warrants in an effort to take their bottles from us. We were able to adjust each such incident by compromise, but finally the matter became too annoying, and we decided, at a special meeting, to fight the case through the courts.

As president of the Bottle Dealers Association, it fell upon me to map our course of action. We engaged an attorney by the name of E. N. Zoline, and for a long time there was continuous litigation.

We made a test case of one suit. It was tried before a Justice of the Peace, and we then took it from one court to another, until it reached the Supreme Court, where we received a decision in our favor. However, the Brewers Association, which consisted of wealthy and powerful concerns, would not give up so easily. They sent their lawyers to Springfield to introduce a new act, making it an offense for a dealer to buy, sell or have in his possession bottles with their names on them.

To fight such action, our attorney spent weeks in Springfield. He was successful in defeating the bill with the Committee, but a year later the matter was again taken up at Springfield, and the law was passed. We continued fighting, however, and finally, after a great many conferences, the controversy was straightened out in a manner satisfactory to both sides. It was agreed that we would be allowed to handle the bottles, but that the various firms involved would set the prices that we were to pay and the prices we were to receive.

The prolonged litigation was mentioned frequently in the newspapers, and I, of course, received a share of the publicity. I soon became known as the representative of the bottle dealers. Although it was acknowledged among the brewers and bottlers that I had been the leader of the opposition, yet when any of them needed bottles of any kind, with or without names, they would, as a rule, give me the first chance for the business.

Through all this publicity, I became known to brewers outside of Chicago, such as Anheuser-Busch, American Brewing Company and the William Lamp Brewing Company in St. Louis and other large cities. Gradually my business grew, until I became a wholesale, as well as a retail, dealer in bottles, selling by carloads, and quite often I would receive an order for as many as ten or fifteen carloads at a time.

Later on, about twenty members of the soft drink bottlers association seceded and formed their own organization, and I was appointed the exclusive agent to handle the bottles for them. The Milk Dealers' Association, headed by representatives of the Borden and Bowman dairy companies, then called me in, and they also appointed me as their exclusive agent to handle their milk bottles. I thereupon gave up the retail part of my business entirely, and operated only on a wholesale basis, doing very well until the outbreak of the World War, when I had to give up this business.

To manage properly the collection for the above-mentioned concerns, I employed a man by the name of Leonard I. Vitkin, whom I found to be a steady worker, honest, straightforward, intelligent and reliable. Mr. Vitkin is still associated with me and my sons, having been with us for the past thirty-five years.

It was about the year 1904 that Mr. Vitkin came to me one day for advice. A friend of his, a Mr. Louis Cohen, who was dealing in various kinds of animal hair, chiefly that derived from horses' tails and manes and cattle tails, wanted Mr. Vitkin to go into partnership with him, which would mean an investment of several hundred dollars, on his part.

When in Tilsit, Germany, I had handled some of this material and had learned something about it. I knew that it was something that was always in demand and could be sold at prevailing market prices almost any time. I accordingly told Mr. Vitkin that my advice would be for him to enter into the partnership. He thereupon left my employ, and went into business with Mr. Cohen.

Within a short time he was back, with a sad story. He informed me that they were losing money, and that his partner, who had invested no money in the enterprise, was careless and inefficient. He was afraid that his investment would be lost, and he again sought my advice.

We discussed the matter at length, and after considering it from every angle, I gave him my opinion, to this effect — that since it was a partnership, with both men having equal rights in the business, either one might dispose of the assets as he saw fit; and I advised him to take all of the goods on hand and bring them to my place of business, on Canal Street, or store them somewhere else, in his name, for protection. When that was done, I told him, we could decide on the next step.

Mr. Vitkin followed my suggestion, and brought the goods to my place. I thereupon invited his partner to come to see us and talk the matter over. After a lengthy discussion with both partners, I came to the conclusion that the business could be developed but that it needed better management and a capital of at least six to eight thousand dollars, in addition to the current investment.

We accordingly formed a corporation, under the name of the Horwich-Vitkin Company, and each one was assigned to certain duties. Mr. Cohen was to do the buying, Mr. Vitkin was to take care of the inside work, and I was to handle the financial end. After trying this out for several months and finding we were still losing money, it was decided that Mr. Cohen should retire, while Mr. Vitkin and I remain in the business to see whether we could recover our losses. After Mr. Vitkin thought it over, however, he decided that he would prefer to stand his loss and retire from the hair business, returning to my employ, as before.

After some discussion, I accepted his proposal, with the understanding that he was also to work with me in the hair business, at a fixed salary, in addition to which he was to receive a certain percentage of any earnings from the business after all former losses were recovered.

From that time on, we concentrated on learning more about the hair business, and gradually began to make money. Within a short time, we recovered our losses, and soon we were showing a profit every month and making progress. The Horwich-Vitkin Company has now been in existence over thirty-five years. A subsidiary company was subsequently developed and incorporated under the name of the Chicago Curled Hair Company, and the latter firm is now thirty years old.

At this time, I would like to relate an experience I had, during those early days in the hair business, with an American business man, who admitted to being anti-Semitic. I feel it is pertinent because today the air is filled with talk of the Jewish question.

A Mr. Marshall, a fine-looking, elderly man, would come to Chicago every two or three weeks for the purpose of making purchases of cattle hair, and so forth, for his concern, which had a branch office on Lake Street. I was anxious to sell him, but for about six months tried to see him without success. Every time I presented my card, I was informed he could not see me. Finally I made it my business to find out just where his private office was, and learned that it was located on the second floor of the building. I rushed in one forenoon, without stopping at the reception desk, rapped at his door and was inside before he knew it.

"Mr. Marshall," I said, "you must excuse me. Being in a great hurry, I took the liberty of running in on you without getting permission from the information desk downstairs."

He gave me a very unpleasant look and told me that it was rather indiscreet on the part of a stranger to force himself into his office.

"You are perfectly right, Mr. Marshall," I replied. "But I have tried to have the pleasure of meeting you for about six months. Not being permitted to do so, I have had to resort to this undignified method. I know," I continued, "that you are buying large quantities of the material which I have for sale, and on which I can do much better than my competitors. Here are my samples."

Mr. Marshall looked annoyed and said rather harshly: "I do not want to see your samples, and I do not want to do any business with you. If you want to know the reason, you can have it."

Thinking that it was a question of quality or price, I said: "Very well, Mr. Marshall, I shall be glad to hear the reason."

"The reason," he stated, "is because I do not want to do any business with Jews."

Of course, I was taken aback, and stood for a moment nonplussed. Then, regaining my self-control, I picked up my samples, and said:

"I am really sorry that I did not know this before. Had your information clerk told me this in the first place, I would not have come here so often, and certainly would not have disturbed you now. Goodbye," I added, and started to go.

As I was about to open the door, he called me back.

"Did you hear well what I said?" he asked.

"Sure, I did, Mr. Marshall. You do not want to do business with me because I am Jewish, so that settles it."

"Don't you feel at all offended?" he inquired.

"You are entitled," I remarked, "to your likes and dislikes, as well as I am. You don't like to do business with me because I am

Jewish. I don't like to do business with some people for other reasons, so why should I be offended?"

"You are a very peculiar man," he said. "Well, let's see what you have."

I showed him the samples and gave him the prices.

"How can I depend on it," he asked, "that the material you will ship me will be the exact quality of the sample?"

"I will ship you a carload of this cattle hair," I answered, "and on its arrival at your plant, if you find that the quality of the shipment is not exactly like the sample, which I am leaving here with you, you can hold that carload at my disposition, and not release it until I pay you for the trouble and expense that you have incurred on account of rejecting the purchase."

Mr. Marshall called in his stenographer and asked me to dictate this agreement. Three days later the carload was shipped, and a few days after the arrival of the shipment I received a check in full. From then on I did business with him for many years, and there was never a question of quality nor a question of price. Our association lasted until his death, when the firm gave up that branch of the business.

About two years after our first meeting, he told me, in the presence of others, that the reason he gave me a chance to do business with him was because I did not start to argue with him when he told me that he did not want to deal with Jews. He said that whenever he had made that statement before, in every instance the person to whom he said it would fly off the handle and start abusing him, trying to force him to like him against his will.

I relate this experience as a suggestion to some of my sensitive fellow Jews, who write and shout from the housetops, "Anti-Semite," at the slightest provocation. My advice, in such a situation, is to be calm and adopt a sensible attitude, instead of trying to gain one's point through abuse.

* * *

My brother, Sam, who lived in Milwaukee, would come to Chicago quite often, and we brothers would all meet to have dinner together, and discuss our affairs and other topics of common interest. At these gatherings, if anyone was worried or disturbed, Harris would come forward with his philosophy and optimism. If any of us complained about business or was pessimistic because of increasing expenses, or had some other problem, Harris' words calmed and encouraged us.

"Here we are," he would say, "five families, some of them rather large — and a large family in Europe. Even though we are growing older, we can still proudly say that we have a father who is over eighty and a mother about the same age. We hear of no illness and we hear of no deaths. So far as we know, everyone makes at least a fair living, and no one has cause to complain about his health, which is the most important thing in life."

He would go on to cite historical cases and relate what had happened to this or that great family, concluding that we should consider ourselves very fortunate and happy. He frequently advised us against trying to accumulate too much wealth, citing the Talmud to show that great wealth is often a great misfortune. We should rather try to enjoy ourselves through culture, he would tell us, and not complain about not making enough money.

Though, as Harris pointed out, we had been quite fortunate, this happy state of affairs did not last. Not long afterward, alas, death began to visit us too often.

In 1906 I received a cable informing me of the death of our father. It was a great blow to all of us, although the fact that he had lived to be nearly ninety, and had died of old age, was of considerable comfort.

Only about eight months later, another cable brought us the sad news that Mother had joined Father in death. It recalled the statement she had made to me the last time I saw her. She had been talking of her children and grandchildren and had expressed the hope that she would live long enough to see them all. But, she added, she wanted Father to have this happiness with her. She always prayed to God, she said, that Father would not be a widower, nor she a widow. When I asked her how such a thing could possibly be accomplished, she replied: "Everything is in the hands of God." Her wish that they both be taken at the same time was very nearly fulfilled, as they both died in the same year.

In 1908, our youngest brother, Sam, suddenly took ill, and it was necessary for him to come to Chicago for an operation. Harris and I visited him at St. Luke's Hospital, where he was confined for many weeks, and on one of our visits had a rather painful experience. We did not report at the desk on this occasion, but went directly to his room. There we saw three nuns, with candles in their hands, kneeling in prayer at his bedside. Sam was covered with a white sheet, so that we could not see his face, and we were terrified, thinking he was dead. Harris was unable to speak and nearly collapsed. We waited at the door until the nuns came out, sick with fear. But to our great relief, one of the nuns said, smilingly, "Thank God, the worst is over."

When I asked her why they had been so deep in prayer, she replied: "Though the crisis is past, he is not well yet, and we have been praying for his recovery."

In a few weeks, Sam was well enough to return to Milwaukee. But not long afterward, we were stunned by the news of his death. It happened so unexpectedly that we could hardly believe it. My three brothers and I had been having lunch in Lieberman's Restaurant on Roosevelt Road, one day in December, 1908, when I was called to the telephone, being informed that it was a long distance call from Milwaukee. I assumed it was Sam who was calling, because he had often 'phoned us at that restaurant during the noon hour. Instead, I heard the excited voice of his bookkeeper saying that Sam's hat had been found floating in the Milwaukee River, and no one knew what had become of him. (The building was located on the edge of the river.) I instructed the bookkeeper to see what he could find out and call us back as soon as he could. Ten minutes later, he called back, relating the shocking news that Sam had fallen into the river, and they had recovered his body. This was the greatest calamity that had befallen us.

We left at once for Milwaukee, but hesitated to face Sam's family, as they were as yet unaware of the tragedy. None of us felt equal to the ordeal of telling them the truth. Accordingly, we asked a friend of ours in that city, a Mr. Gartenstein, to break the sad news to them. This painful task over, I suggested that they all go to Chicago that very evening, and that I would remain in Milwaukee to arrange the matter of bringing Sam's body to Chicago. When I returned, about noon the next day, I was met at the station by a large crowd of friends and fellow-Zionists.

Sam was laid to rest, and there were now only four brothers, instead of five. It took us years to get over this tragedy. The one most deeply affected was David, who had come to this country with Sam, and was especially close to him since they had married two sisters and were together in business. He knew best how lovable and charitable Sam was, and was simply unable to get over his loss.

Sam's widow, who was thirty-six years old at the time, was left with five children, three boys and two girls. She had a little money, but not enough to support herself and the children for long. With a little assistance from us, however, she managed to rear them, bringing up five very fine men and women. The oldest son, David, is a lawyer; Fillmore, the second son, is an auditor; and Julius, the third son, is employed by a stock and bond concern. Her daughter, Evelyn, is married to an unusually fine person, Mr. Abe Klonek, who is a gentleman in every respect and a good business man. The other daughter, Violet, is also happily married, her husband being Henry Wenk.

Very often we hear about the love of a mother, especially the love of a Jewish mother, for her children. A mother like Lena, the widow of our youngest brother, however, is, I sincerely believe, one in a million. When her husband died, she devoted her life to her children, and today, although in her late sixties, and in poor health, she is still anxious and concerned about them, and interested in whatever they do. She is with them as much as possible, and when away from them, writes almost daily. While they were growing up, she did all the housework herself, working day and night for their comfort and well being. In spite of her difficulties, she was always smiling and contented. She never complained, and frankly refused sympathy. She has been rewarded with as fine children as can be found in any family.

Alas, it was only about four years after Sam's passing that David died. Without warning, he suffered an acute attack of appendicitis. We rushed him to a hospital, where he underwent an operation, and on October 29, 1912, he passed away.

If the accidental death of our youngest brother, Sam, was a calamity, the unexpected and sudden death of David was a tragedy beyond description. We had always regarded David as the kindest and most lovable among us — the gentleman of the family. He was loved and admired by all with whom he came in contact, either in business or socially.

Among those who attended the funeral was Mr. Webb, founder of the Thomas J. Webb Coffee Company. Standing beside the coffin, he repeated many times, with tears flowing from his eyes: "Our good Dave! Poor, poor Dave! So sudden, and so young!" He spoke with such emotion that I feared he would be overcome, and I had to support him and lead him away from the coffin.

David left a wonderful wife and seven children, all of whom grew up to be fine men and women, under the loving care and guidance of their widowed mother.

Philip, the oldest, is like his father in every respect, and, like him, is admired and esteemed by all who know him.

Ben is a well-known business man, as are Milton and Abe.

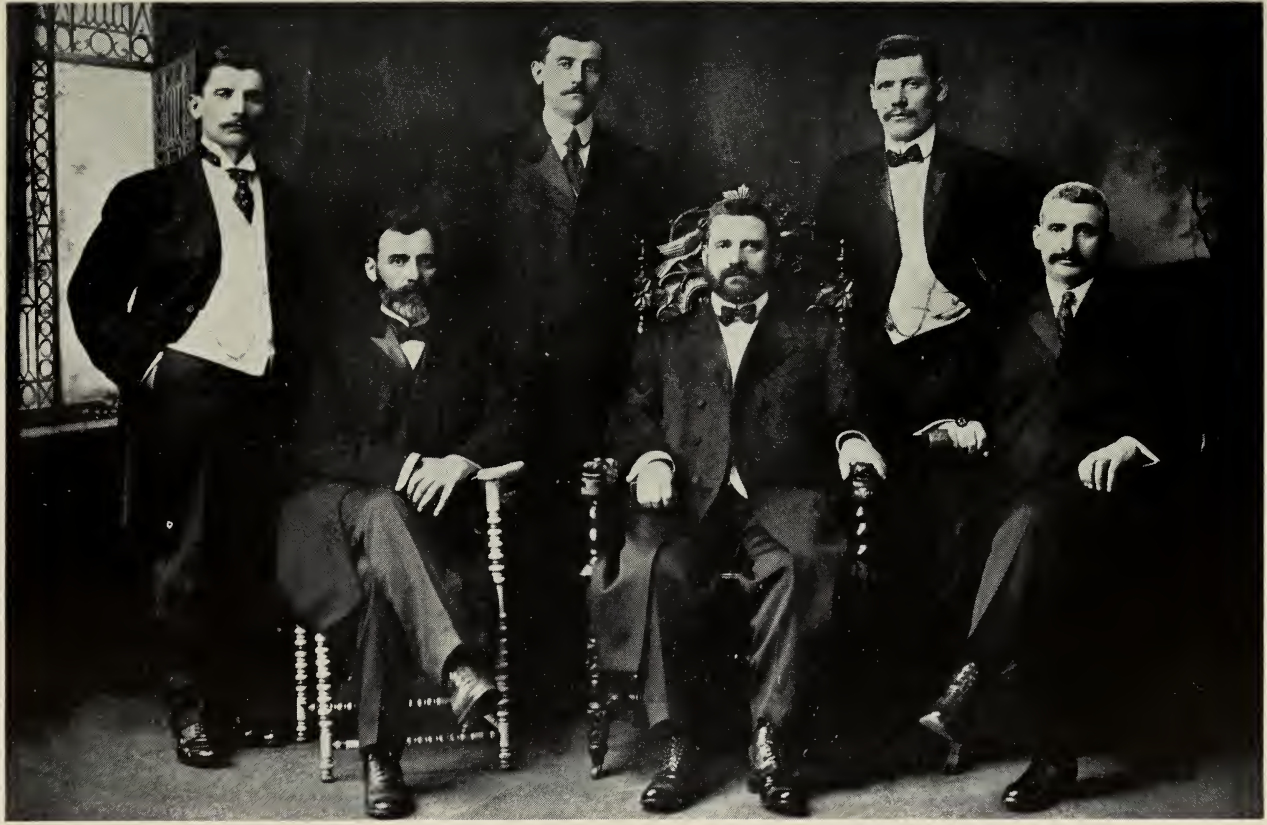
Adeline is married to Mr. Harry Phillips, a very fine person, and Belle is married to Mr. Jack Shapiro, who is an exceptionally straightforward and able business man and possesses an unusually fine mind.

Irving passed away several years ago.

* * *

My brother Henry's business prospered amazingly. The firm of Davis & Horwich became known throughout the country, and was constantly increasing its output, employing hundreds of men.

One day prior to my brother David's passing, Mr. Davis came to me and informed me that at Henry's suggestion, they were going to take into the business, as a third partner, one of their salesmen, a Mr. Steinman, who was willing to invest $50,000 in the firm. The idea did not appeal to me, as I knew they were not in need of additional capital, and I spoke to Henry about it, cautioning him that it would be unwise and impractical to take in a third person. Henry insisted that this was necessary, as the business had grown too large for two men to handle. In that case, I suggested, it would be better that he choose one of his four brothers, rather than a stranger, mentioning David, in particular, the latter being a good business man, and honest and straightforward in every respect. I also assured Henry that I would see to it that he secured for investment the same amount, $50,000, as Mr. Steinman had offered. Henry, however, refused to consider my suggestions.



THE SIX HORWICH BROTHERS
Standing, left to right, David, Sam, Henry
Seated, left to right, Harris, Aron, Bernard (the author)

I was introduced to Mr. Steinman, but not being able to form an adequate opinion, made inquiries concerning him. It appeared, from these, that he would never fit into the business. If the firm really required a third man, he should be a hard worker and an experienced and able business man. I warned Mr. Davis and Henry that sooner or later they would find they had made a mistake, but though I explained my attitude to Henry and reasoned, and even argued with him, it was to no avail. Within a short time, Mr. Steinman was taken into the business, and the firm name was changed to Davis, Horwich & Steinman.

Not long afterward, Mr. Davis came to me with unpleasant news. He had learned, he said, that Mr. Steinman was influencing Henry to get rid of him, and he feared they were going to "freeze him out" by making things so miserable for him that he would be compelled to leave, thus losing everything he had. His health, he said, had become impaired through worrying over this state of affairs.

I could not believe that Henry would really do such a thing. Though he was of an obdurate nature, and self-willed, I knew him to be completely honest, and that he would not commit a wrong against anyone, especially against Mr. Davis, who had built up the business with him. I realized there must have been some outside influence. Determined to straighten the matter out, I reminded Henry that it was through me that Mr. Davis had joined him in the business; that he knew as well as I what a fine person Mr. Davis was, and that I was determined he should not be injured in any way. It was finally agreed, after many discussions and debates that Davis would leave the firm, but would receive his full share of the net assets of the concern. The larger part of this was paid to him at the time of the separation, and the balance was paid in installments, with interest. The firm subsequently was operated under the name of Horwich & Steinman.

After leaving the company, Mr. Davis went into the real estate business. He was very successful, and became a wealthy man. Though he lost a great deal during the depression, he is still fairly well situated and getting along very nicely.

To my sorrow, the firm of Horwich & Steinman started on the downgrade soon after Mr. Davis left it. Had not Mr. Steinman received considerable financial assistance from his family, the business could not have lasted more than a few years. As it was, they managed to keep it going for about twelve years, but were finally compelled to give it up.

Poor Henry realized the mistake he had made, and admitted it; but it was too late. Though he had managed to salvage a little, it sustained him for only a short time. He became ill, and had to receive assistance from his close relatives. He never recovered, and died several years later, of a broken heart. However, his death could not have been considered truly tragic, in view of the fact that he was over seventy years old when he passed away, and had been for a number of years seriously ill and practically helpless. What grieved me most at the funeral, and for a long time afterward, was that he had brought sorrow to himself and his family by permitting himself to be led astray. By nature, Henry was a good, friendly and charitable man, a hard worker and very ambitious, and might have continued to be successful in his business, had he followed a different course.

Henry was the fifth of the six Horwich brothers to leave this world, and I remained alone. Sitting at the funeral services, sick at heart, I turned to a Rabbi who sat beside me, and quoted a passage from Exodus: "If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself."

Alone I came to this country, and alone I will go out.

* * *

Henry left six children, Minnie, Philip, Meyer, David, Louis and Frieda. His son-in-law, the late Jake Rosenberg, who was married to the older daughter, Minnie, was a prominent business man of this city, and well known in business circles of New York, Boston and Philadelphia. He was a good husband and father, and showed his fine character in his consideration for his father-in-law, assisting the latter generously, when necessary, to the time of his death.

I would like to make special mention of Henry's other son-in-law, Ben Aronin, who is married to the younger daughter, Frieda. In character and personality, he is one in a million. Although American-born and raised, and possessing a wide cultural background, he observes strictly the laws of Orthodox Jewry — not in a fanatical sense, but with love and understanding. He believes sincerely in the Creator and in the purposefulness of human life, and inspires others with this belief. He is an outstanding orator, and captures his hearers with his brilliance, enthusiasm and sincerity, and his amazing knowledge of any subject he may choose to discuss. In my opinion, he can hold his own with anyone in this city, as a scholar, in matters both religious and secular. I feel I am qualified to render such a judgment because of my contacts with all kinds and classes of people during the past fifty years, during which time I have had ample opportunity to make observations and comparisons.

Mr. Aronin has written several books, and has just completed a monumental work, called the "Abramiad," an epic of our people. This he wrote originally in Hebrew, and then translated into English. It has been favorably commented upon by several of the outstanding Hebrew scholars in the country.

He is at home in any group, and in any situation. Above all, despite his versatile gifts, he is unusually modest, and a perfect gentleman in every respect.

Mr. Aronin is a prominent figure in the Anshe Emet Synagogue. This synagogue has grown to great importance and influence, under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Solomon Goldman, and the sincere and devoted efforts of its president, Mr. Hyman N. Kohn.

CHAPTER VI

BEGINNINGS OF ZIONISM

One day, in the early nineties, I received a letter inviting me to attend a meeting for the purpose of forming an organization to be known as the Hebrew Literary Society. I showed it to Harris, and he became very enthusiastic over the project. I learned that such a group had been formed once before, under a different name, but due to lack of support, had been dissolved.

I was not particularly interested in Hebrew, although I had studied it to some extent as a child, in "cheder." During the ensuing years, I had little occasion to use the language and had forgotten a good deal. I went to the meeting only at the insistence of Harris. Against my objections, I was elected an officer, and later I even served as president of the Society.

The activities of the group were, of course, directed along the lines of Hebrew culture. At each meeting, a member was required to read a chapter from Graetz's "History of the Jews" in Hebrew and then review it and comment upon it. When my turn came, I was permitted to read my chapter in Yiddish instead of in Hebrew, and both my reading and my comments were well received at the meeting.

The Hebrew Literary Society soon became the headquarters for all social-minded Jews of the West Side. There they held various entertainments, lectures and discussions on all manner of topics. It was there that the first Zionist group in the city was organized, and when the latter grew to be a powerful and effective organization, the Hebrew Literary Society was absorbed by it.

* * *

The year 1896 was an important one in Jewish life, for it was then that Dr. Theodore Herzl published his famous book, "Yudenstaat," in which he advocated the creation of a Jewish state, with its own government, in Palestine.

Dr. Herzl, the father of political Zionism, was an Austrian Jew. A brilliant young journalist, acting as Paris correspondent for the "Neue Freie Presse" (New Free Press), of Vienna, at the time of the Dreyfuss affair, he was deeply affected by the episode.

He was astonished to observe how the usually liberal-minded Frenchmen became wild with hatred towards the Jews, as a result of the trial. He saw crowds marching through the streets of Paris, shouting "Down with the Jews," while all the time the guilty individuals and the persecutors of Dreyfuss knew that he was being falsely accused and condemned.

Convinced of the innocence of Dreyfuss, and realizing the unfortunate man was convicted chiefly because he was a Jew, Dr. Herzl decided that something must be done to alleviate the helplessness of the Jews in such situations and strengthen their position in the world. He set forth his ideas in the book, "Yudenstaat," which created a sensation. It became at once the topic of conversation and debate among Jews all over the world. Later Dr. Herzl wrote another book along similar lines, called "Alt Neuland" (Old Newland).

The idea of political Zionism, of a Jewish state, was attacked by the American Jews, of the Reformed as well as the Orthodox groups. It was approved by neither the rich nor the poor. The well-to-do Jews proclaimed that we were American citizens and this was our home; that we belonged to the American nation and therefore had no right to form a special Jewish nation; that if we did so, we would be disloyal and unpatriotic. They felt that if the movement succeeded, it would furnish anti-Semites here with an excuse to tell us to go to our own country, thus giving them an additional weapon.

The Orthodox Jews, headed by their Rabbis, opposed the project from a religious standpoint, claiming that Dr. Herzl was not interested in the Jewish religion or in Jewish affairs, as such; that Palestine did not have for him a deep religious significance; that nobody had ever heard of him before, as he had taken no active part in Jewish life, and that he was not the proper person to be the leader in such a holy cause.

Harris, who had been to Palestine, became wild with enthusiasm over the project, and insisted that I get busy at once and do something about it. I told him that since I knew very little about Dr. Herzl's plan, I did not feel qualified to call together a group of people to discuss so important a matter without learning more about the subject.

Harris, however, was impatient for action, and succeeded in gathering together several men, among them a lawyer by the name of William Jonesi, and prevailed upon them to call a meeting to discuss the plan as outlined by Dr. Herzl. The meeting was held a week later in a hall on Jefferson Street, with Mr. Jonesi acting as chairman. About fifty people attended, and the discussions lasted from two in the afternoon until six, with speakers for and against the proposition.

Harris was the chief speaker in favor of forming an organization to further the movement, and submitted innumerable arguments. He employed his resources of wit and humor to cause the audience to burst into laughter. Then, changing his style, he described the tragedy of the Jews in Russia, Poland and other countries, stressing the Dreyfuss case, and moved many to tears. His brilliant efforts, however, were of no avail. When the vote was taken, it was found that those present were against the plan about five to one.

But Harris did not give up. One evening he brought a few well known Hebrew scholars to my home, among them being Mr. Zolotkoff, Dr. A. P. Kadison, and Mr. Wolf Shure, publisher of a Hebrew paper in Chicago. They urged me to call another meeting, and would not let me rest until I had promised to do so. We set ourselves to arouse interest in the matter, and within two weeks the meeting was held. Then and there was formed the first organized Zionist group in America, of which I was made president. It was called, "The Chicago Zionist Organization, No. 1." An energetic young man, Wolf Sudowsky, was elected secretary, and Elias Epstein, a cigar manufacturer, treasurer. It was our intention to form branches, as the movement grew, which would be called by their respective numbers.

A lone member of the German-Jewish group was present — Dr. Bernard Felsenthal. He spoke in German. He encouraged us, and told us that though he was an old man and would not live to see the fruits of the vast undertaking, he would do everything he could, until his last day on earth, and in the world to come, to further the cause of Zionism. His words were very impressive, and inspired the new members with enthusiasm for their work.

Six months later, after our organization was in full swing, a Zionist group was formed in New York. We had, in the meantime, increased our membership substantially and had become strongly imbued with the spirit of Zionism.

Shortly afterward, we read in the newspapers, that Dr. Herzl was calling upon the Jews of all countries to send delegates to a Zionist Congress, to be held in Basle, Switzerland, in 1897. It goes without saying that we were very eager to send a delegate to such an epochal gathering. Not having sufficient money available in our treasury for this purpose, I called upon all the members to pledge what amounts they could, and in this way we raised $100.00. We further formed a committee to go from store to store, and from house to house, to collect whatever they could get, from a dime up, so that we might be enabled to send our delegate in a proper manner. For a whole week, I spent half-days collecting, with different partners. It was a very hard and unpleasant task. For every quarter we received, we were treated to a dollar's worth of abuse. But finally enough money was raised to defray the necessary expense.

We chose as our representative, Mr. Leon Zolotkoff, considering him the best man available. He knew English, German, Russian, Yiddish and Hebrew, and was well versed in the philosophy of Zionism. When he left for Basle, we were very happy and proud of our achievement. If I am not mistaken, he was the only American delegate to the first World Zionist Congress, representing the first Zionist group organized in this country.

When Mr. Zolotkoff returned from Europe, I went to Buffalo to meet him, and on our way to Chicago, he described to me what had taken place at the Congress. It was all most interesting and inspiring, and his report of the proceedings was listened to eagerly by the members of our group.

At that time, we decided it would be expedient to change the form of our organization to that of a fraternal society, with a center in Chicago and branches in and around the city. Within sixty days, we had an organization known as the Knights of Zion, our group being known as Gate No. 1, and inside of a year, we had ten branches, called "Gates," in various parts of the city and state, and even in other states. The total membership of the organization had grown to many thousands. I continued as President, Mr. Zolotkoff was Secretary, and Mr. Elias Epstein, Treasurer.

Owing to the press of my personal affairs and my preoccupation with other communal enterprises, I was unable to act as President of the Knights of Zion for more than two years. Mr. Zolotkoff succeeded me as President, with Mr. N. D. Kaplan as Secretary. Later Dr. R. L. Halperin was elected President, and he was succeeded by a young lawyer, Max Shulman, while H. L. Meites became Secretary.

In connection with this work, I had a somewhat provoking experience with Mr. Zolotkoff, who though a scholar, an outstanding journalist, a lovable person, and one of the best friends I had, was even worse than my brother, Harris, in practical matters.

A Zionist bank had been organized in London, under the name of the Jewish Colonial Trust Bank, and every Zionist group was required to buy shares of stock at $5.00 a share. I at once ordered, for my group, if I remember correctly, 3,000 shares, and guaranteed payment for the full amount. The shares were supposed to arrive within four weeks after the placing of the order; but we waited two months, and three months, and they did not arrive. We wrote and cabled many times, and each time received word that the shares had been forwarded soon after the order was received, and should have reached us three months since. I was responsible for the purchase and had advertised it widely. I had spoken at meetings and secured subscriptions for the entire lot — but there were no shares.

One afternoon I stopped in at the office of Mr. Zolotkoff, who was at that time practicing law and writing for the Daily Jewish Courier. As he was not in, I sat down to wait for him. My attention was attracted to a big bundle lying in a corner, half-covered with old and torn papers. Upon investigating, I found there the shares for which we had been waiting so long. I was so angry that I thought it best to take the bundle with me at once, without waiting for Mr. Zolotkoff's return, so that I might have a chance to "cool off" before I saw him.

The Zionist movement rapidly grew in importance, and soon one found articles concerning Zionism in the English papers, as well as the Yiddish papers, practically every week, and frequently every day.

The Chicago Daily Jewish Courier, the only source of information for thousands of newcomers in and around Chicago, was eminently helpful to the cause. This paper, which had been started by Mr. Leon Zolotkoff before the Zionist movement began, was afterwards taken over by a Mr. Sarasohn, publisher of the "Yiddish Tageblatt" (Jewish Daily News) of New York, and finally by Mr. M. Phillip Ginzburg, of Chicago. Under the latter's guidance, the paper became the leading organ for the West Side Jews, and in fact, for all the Orthodox Jews throughout Chicago and surrounding towns. It was one of our greatest supports in our work for Zionism, and we had the benefit of the personal advice and cooperation of Mr. Ginzburg, one of the finest and most influential men of the community.

Also helpful in furthering the movement has been the Chicago Forward, which was established in 1920 as a branch of the New York paper of that name. Although these papers, under the management of the nationally known Abe Kahn, give their chief aid and support to the labor movement and are recognized as champions of the laboring class, they have not forgotten other aspects of Jewish life. They rendered great and valuable service in the matter of relief for European war sufferers, and have cooperated in other communal and welfare work. The Chicago Forward is edited by Mr. Jacob Siegel, who is a fine, level-headed individual, well fitted for his task and well liked by all who know him.

* * *

Though encouraged by the Yiddish press, we were criticized by the early Jewish-English papers, and by Rabbis from their pulpits. We were called cheap politicians, hypocrites, Christian missionaries, unpatriotic, and false Messiahs. Quite often we were prevented by the officers of synagogues from holding meetings or speaking about Zionism there. If we tried to speak, the lights would be turned out on us. Even in other meeting places, we experienced like difficulties.

One of the strongest critics of early Zionism was a man by the name of Yoel Liebling, who came to Chicago, if I am not mistaken, from Pittsburgh, and started a newspaper here called "The Yiddishe Presse."

Mr. Liebling was a rather imposing-looking individual, straight and well built. He was quite intelligent — was a Talmudist and Hebraist, and a forceful writer, but extremely critical. He understood the psychology of the Jewish reading public and knew that criticisms and attacks on people in public life are eagerly read by the masses.

Though not an anti-Zionist, actually, he was aware of the weak points of the movement, and on every occasion used his clever and sarcastic pen to expose and ridicule them. He also seemed to take joy in exposing the shortcomings of Orthodox Rabbis and criticizing and belittling some of the outworn traditions and ceremonies of Orthodox Judaism.

By such tactics, he attracted subscribers and kept increasing his circulation from day to day. Although he was in turn criticized and bitterly attacked, because of his methods, by speakers at various meetings and among people generally, he was regarded as a forceful and clever man and one to be reckoned with, especially by the Jews of the West Side.

One day, while in New York on business, I received from my brother, Harris, a letter enclosing a clipping from Mr. Liebling's paper. It was quite a long article, defaming in an abhorrent manner my father-in-law, Rabbi Anixter. I was quite shocked by it. Harris had been so aroused that he wanted me to write to my two young sons to form a group of their school friends and attack the building where the newspaper was published with gravel and other such small missiles, smashing a few windows and thus bringing the matter to the attention of the general press. Of course, I did not approve of his plan, which I knew had been suggested in the heat of his anger, and wrote to him to that effect.

I did write him, however, that I felt there were three ways of dealing with this vicious attack upon Rabbi Anixter. One was to sue Mr. Liebling for libel if, upon legal advice, it seemed warranted. Secondly, since he had attacked the oldest and most venerable Rabbi in Chicago, it should be left to the Rabbis of the city to decide what action to take. My third suggestion was that it might be best simply to ignore the whole matter and let the readers of his paper judge him.

Being busily occupied with my affairs in New York, I soon forgot about the incident. Some ten days later, I was greatly surprised, on passing a newspaper stand, to see the headline, "Publisher of a Jewish Newspaper in Chicago Excommunicated." There followed a long article relating why this had been done, and how the procedure had been carried out. The formal excommunication had taken place in the largest Orthodox synagogue in Chicago. Seated on the platform were all the Orthodox Rabbis of the city, and there was a capacity audience of over a thousand, with many hundreds waiting on the outside, unable to get in. The ceremonies lasted until midnight, when it was formally announced that Mr. Liebling was thereafter to be considered "untouchable," and that according to the Jewish laws, no one was to do any business with him or have communication with him until he made a public apology to the Rabbi, when the ban would be lifted.

That same evening, I received a long letter from Harris, relating how the Rabbis had come to the conclusion that this "cherem" (excommunication) should be resorted to, how the people had responded, and how the matter was accomplished. The event was mentioned in the principal newspapers of the country and aroused much comment.

Mr. Liebling finally had to transfer his newspaper to his son, under whose management it continued to appear for many years, with no loss in circulation. The older Mr. Liebling, however, to the day of his death, could not regain his lost power and prestige.

As for myself, I never did approve of the drastic action taken, and would certainly have tried to prevent it, had I been in Chicago at the time.

* * *

In spite of all the obstacles we early Zionists encountered, we succeeded in securing more members and raising more money, spreading the ideals of Zionism through the press and through speakers, and the movement continued to expand.

The World Zionist Congress became a permanent institution, and a congress was held every year. We managed to send a delegate to practically each one. At first, it was a simple matter for anyone who wished it, to become a delegate. The difficulty was to get someone able and willing to make the trip. But this changed as the movement became larger and more important. The Zionist Congress became an epochal event, and the leaders found it necessary to restrict the number of delegates and choose them carefully.

In 1901, I was accorded the honor of being chosen as a delegate. It was quite a responsible undertaking for me to go, as at that time I already had four children and a growing business, employing many workers, to look after. My father-in-law, Rabbi Anixter, and my brothers strongly advised against it, arguing that I was not well enough established financially to spare the time and assume the expense of such a trip. I was determined to pay my own way, as I did not consider it dignified or proper to go to the Congress at the expense of the Zionist Organization.

There were several reasons why I was anxious to go. Among them was the fact that my parents were greatly advanced in years, and I wanted to see them before it was too late. The trip would also give me an opportunity to see again relatives and friends of my earlier days. Especially, however, was I eager to meet Dr. Herzl, Dr. Nordau and other celebrities of the Congress and the Zionist movement.

Those of my friends and acquaintances who were not interested in Zionism or knew very little about it, thought I was a silly fanatic. In my heart of hearts, I could not help feeling that they were, perhaps, right. The situation of the Jews everywhere happened to be, at that time, very good, comparatively speaking. Even in Russia and Poland, the Jews were getting along quite well, and here in America, the great majority of Jews were either not interested in Zionism or were opposed to it.

However, the idea of attending the Congress fascinated me, and I could not give it up. I arranged my affairs as well as possible, and left with the well wishes of all Chicago Zionists.

When I arrived in New York, I went to see Professor Richard Gottheil, who was then the president of the New York Zionist Organization. He gave me some instructions about the Congress, all of a general nature, however. The next day I sailed for Hamburg, from where I would go on to Basle.

My first thought, when I arrived at Hamburg, was to inquire of people there about Zionism and Dr. Herzl. To my great disappointment, I could find no one who knew anything about the movement.

I had an amusing experience in that city. Stopping in at a restaurant for lunch, with a friend, I asked for hamburger steak, but none of the waiters knew what it was. It seemed very strange to me, and I could hardly believe it. My friend, however, explained that the name "hamburger" was used only in foreign countries, while in Hamburg proper, they called it "chopped meat."

Three days later, I arrived in Basle, Switzerland. It was two days preceding the first session of the Congress, but I found that preliminary meetings of various groups were being held. While attending some of these, I met Mr. Jacob De Haas, whom I found to be a lively, energetic little Englishman, and a highly intelligent and very able young man.

When he asked me whether I had any suggestion to make with respect to the Zionist movement, I replied with two words:

"Proper organization." I went on to explain that idealism alone was not sufficient to attract the masses to the movement. We had to have something concrete and practical, and would have to work out ways and means of inducing large numbers of people to join. He shook hands with me and said: "This is exactly what I am working for, and in time I shall have to come to the United States."

While I did not see him a great deal during the Congress, as he was kept busy behind the scenes, we remained friends. We kept in touch with each other until he passed away a few years ago, in New York.

The two days before the opening of the Congress I spent chiefly in getting acquainted. I was pleasantly surprised at the type of men who had come to the Congress. I was awed at the sight of so many imposing personages and thrilled to meet men of importance from almost every country in the world. There were, among them, professors, artists, doctors, lawyers, engineers, men of wealth, learning and distinction, from Germany, Russia and Poland. And chiefly, of course, there was Dr. Herzl himself, as well as such men as Dr. Max Nordau, Dr. Mandelbaum, Ussishkin, Motzkin and others. I must confess that I felt rather lost among all these outstanding people.

I shall never forget an incident that occurred at the Congress. On my way to the first session, I stopped a poorly-dressed, unattractive-looking young man, to inquire regarding the building where the session was to take place. Assuming that he did not understand English, I said to him in German:

"I am from America, but as I believe you do not understand English, I will speak to you in German. Will you please direct me to the hall where the Zionist Congress is to be held?"

Taking my arm, the stranger replied: "We can talk Yiddish. I am going there, and you can come along with me."

When we entered the hall, there was great cheering and applause on all sides. At first I thought the applause was for me, because I was an American; but I immediately realized this was impossible, as very few knew me. I, therefore, responded with a faint smile, and my young friend and I sat down.

Still speaking to him in German-Yiddish, I introduced myself, saying: "We might as well get better acquainted with each other. My name is B. Horwich, and I come from Chicago, in America. May I know your name?"

"My name," he answered, "is Israel Zangwill, and I come from London, England."

I was greatly embarrassed and confused, but managed to say: "Well, now I know for whom they applauded. I came pretty near making a darn fool of myself."

"Oh, no," he answered, "the applause was for you. They know you are an American, and they expect to get big money from the Americans."

I happily had a chance to speak to Dr. Herzl himself for quite a while. He graciously put me at my ease by "speaking my language." That is, he moderated his conversation in accordance with my Yiddish-German, my comparative lack of education and meager knowledge of world affairs, and my superficial understanding of Zionism.

When I mentioned that I felt Zionism should only mean providing a home for such Jews as are homeless, he patted me on the head and answered: "All Jews have homes, and yet they are all homeless."

We shook hands, and he asked me to convey his greetings to our Chicago Zionists. In my report, when I returned to Chicago, I mentioned his comment about all Jews being homeless, and my brother, Harris, enlarged upon this, saying:

"Indeed, we are just like orphans, for orphans have many 'mothers,' but no 'mother' — and we have many Fatherlands, but no Fatherland."

Every word that Dr. Herzl uttered at the Congress was the word of a diplomat. He commanded respect from everyone present. He possessed great personal charm, and his black beard, coal-black eyes and finely chiseled features made a fascinating picture. He looked like an Oriental prince. In his rulings on questions of parliamentary procedure, on points of order and in the matter of recognizing delegates asking to be heard, he proved himself a master parliamentarian.

Outside of the meetings, he was very democratic, and, strange to say, seemed ill at ease, nervous and impatient. Anybody could recognize, however, at first glance, that he was a person of great importance.

Dr. Nordau also was of distinguished appearance. In looks and action he was the typical nobleman. When I introduced myself to him, he lifted his hat and bowed very graciously. Taking my arm, he walked along with me for about twenty minutes, asking questions about America, in which he evinced a deep interest. He spoke an English which was perfect, and far superior to mine, and I soon realized that he knew a great deal more about America than I could tell him. When I later heard him address the Congress, speaking in German, I realized that here was a great master delivering a masterpiece. I have often been led to contrast men of the type of Herzl and Nordau with our present-day statesmen.

A Dr. Klee, from Berlin, an intelligent and gentle individual, was chairman of the executive committee, of which I was a member. At the first committee meeting, he asked me for my title, as practically every delegate had one. Everywhere at the Congress one heard, "Herr Fabrikant," "Herr Engineer," "Herr Kaufman," "Herr Professor," and so on.

Jokingly I told Dr. Klee: "Well, I once acted as a professor, when I instructed my young brother in dancing."

"Very good," he said, "Herr Tanz Professor" (dancing professor). And thereafter I was called "Professor" by all my Zionist friends.

I was made a member of the committee appointed to work out plans for the National Fund, of which committee Dr. Klee was also chairman. I did not then know who was the originator of the National Fund project, but later learned that it was Professor Hermann Shapiro, of Germany. Money raised for this Fund was to be used for the purchasing of land in Palestine, to belong to the Jewish people as a whole and to be administered by the National Fund Organization.

The proposition had been made to make the raising of the money a "penny" affair. The committee felt that it would be easy to induce every Jew in the world to contribute, as often as possible, the smallest coin current in his country, and that thus a large sum would be accumulated. In the United States, it would be one cent; in Russia, if I am not mistaken, one kopek, and so on. They wanted to follow the same system as was used in the "Peter Pence" collection of the Catholic world.

I was strongly opposed to this, and my objection precipitated a four-hour discussion. I argued that we could not compare ourselves with the great, well-disciplined, world organization of the Catholics, with its several hundred million adherents. My suggestion was to agree on a definite sum to be paid annually, for I was sure that it would be much simpler and easier, at least in the United States, to secure from an individual three to five dollars a year, or even more, rather than an accumulation of, say, one hundred pennies. I was, however, overruled.

The motion for the "penny system" was adopted, and stamps were printed for that purpose. I sent samples of the stamps to the London branch of the Chicago Daily News, and when I arrived in London, on my return trip, I saw a copy of that paper, with a long article about the National Fund and pictures of the stamps.

This evidenced the interest of the general public in our activities.

After several years' trial of the above plan, it was proved to be unsuccessful, and the stamps were discontinued. Instead, large sums of money have been raised for the National Fund primarily through special contributions.

After I had been in Basle several days, I received a telegram from the London branch of the Chicago Daily News, asking me to wire them news about the Congress, which they would forward to Chicago. I replied that I was not sufficient master of the English language to write a newspaper article; but they stated that all they needed was an outline. I complied with their request, and later was pleased and proud to see the accounts which they published, feeling I had had a share in them.

* * *

When the Congress was over, I realized my own plans, and my promise to my brothers, and went to visit my parents, who were still living in Poniemon.

I had some difficulty getting into Russia. This was during the Czarist regime, and no Jews were permitted to enter without special permission. To my American passport was attached a printed leaflet, warning American Jews, especially those who came from Russia, that they might meet with difficulties should they attempt to visit that country. I had tried to secure a visa from the Russian authorities in Chicago, and from the Russian Consul in New York, without success.

I now proceeded to the Russian Embassy, in Berlin, hoping to have better luck here. When I stated my request, I was asked to wait for the person in charge. While waiting, I took a cigarette out of my silver cigarette case, and was about to light it, when the official whom I was to see, who was seated at a desk at the end of the room, nodded to me to come over. I complied, and showed him my passport. He studied it, then questioned me, and suddenly asked:

"What kind of cigarettes do you smoke? Are they American?"

"Yes," I replied. And taking out my case I opened it and offered him a cigarette. I noticed that he admired the fine silver case, and said to him, in German:

"It would be an honor to me if you would accept this as a token from an American."

He was greatly pleased and took it very eagerly, cigarettes and all, and without further ado, my passport was approved. I have often wondered whether I would have obtained the visa if I had not had the silver cigarette case.

With this permission secured, I advised my parents as to when I would arrive, and asked them to meet me at Kovno, Russia. I remained in Berlin a few days longer, purchasing gifts to take with me, and then started out, making a stop first at Koenigsberg, my old beloved city. I wanted especially to pay a visit there to my former partner, Max Perlman.

In order to travel in a sleeper in Europe at that time, it was necessary to make a reservation one or two days in advance. As I was not aware of this, I was unable to get a sleeper when I purchased my ticket, and had to sit up all night. It was not a comfortable trip. The second class compartments had seating capacity for six persons, there being three seats on each side, facing each other. I found myself in one of them, in the company of five aristocratic young German naval officers. As they did not deign to converse with me, I felt stiff and ill at ease.

About nine o'clock in the evening, one of the young men said to his companions, "Well, it is time to go to sleep." I was greatly relieved, feeling sure that they had sleeping accommodations elsewhere on the train and that I would now be rid of my dignified fellow travelers. But I was mistaken. One of them turned down the light to a dim flicker, they bade each other good night, and in a few minutes they were all asleep, in a sitting position.

With great difficulty, I extricated myself from these tight quarters, and made my way to the aisle, where I stood, leaning against a window of one of the compartments. As the train passed a sharp curve, I was suddenly thrown against the window, breaking it. Hearing the noise, the conductor came in, and asked who was responsible. Although none of the passengers spoke up, I told him how it had happened. When we reached the next station, the conductor called in the station master and told him the story. He wrote out a report, and from then on I was questioned at every station by an official about the incident, as though I had committed some crime. Finally, I was told I must pay fourteen marks (about $3.50) for the damage done. Though I argued that it was not my fault, I was ordered to pay, or my baggage would be withheld when I arrived at Koenigsberg. One of the passengers advised that I pay, and then file a claim, which I had a right to do.

We arrived in Koenigsberg at ten o'clock the next morning, and I was glad to leave the train. I lost no time in looking up Mr. Perlman, and was surprised to find that he was one of the outstanding grain merchants of the city, owning half a dozen warehouses. He spent a lot of time with me, taking me with him every day to the Board of Trade, where the grain was bought and sold, and each time I was with him, he bought from fifty to seventy-five carloads. His secretary accompanied him and made notes of all his purchases.

He had a large office, employing about fifteen men and women, and it was equipped with a telephone and all the latest office appliances of that time. He would arrive at the office at eight o'clock every morning and issue instructions to each employee for the day's work. Then, at ten o'clock, he would go to inspect the warehouses, which were loaded with grain, and where husky German workmen were busily loading and unloading and doing various other tasks.

I must admit that at the moment I experienced feelings of regret, and even jealousy, for it was I who had started him in that business, as my partner. I was a little hurt that instead of both of us enjoying this prosperity and prestige together, he was now a great grain merchant, while I was just an ordinary dealer in bottles. However, I was consoled by the realization that I would never have been able to continue in business with Mr. Perlman, anyway, for it seemed that the more prosperous he became, the more arrogant and stubborn he grew. He was married to a very fine, good-looking woman, and they had lovely children. I learned, however, from others, that because of his meanness and arrogance, he was very unpopular.

Though Mr. Perlman became very rich, he lost a great deal of money during the World War. He finally went to Palestine, where his sons and daughters were living, and died there.

Leaving Koenigsberg, I went on to Kovno. My oldest brother, Aron, was waiting for me at the station, but we did not recognize each other at first. When we finally made ourselves known to each other, my brother was obviously surprised and disappointed. In Russia, all the men, whatever their circumstances, wore fur coats and fur caps in the winter. The wealthy, of course, wore very luxurious and expensive ones, but practically everyone had some kind of fur coat. Aron had on a very fine one, with a very large fur collar, while I was wearing just a plain overcoat, and an ordinary hat. After the handshaking and the greetings, he expressed astonishment that I had come all the way from America so lightly and simply dressed for the winter.

"We will discuss the Russian and the American ways of dressing in the winter months later on," I told him. "Just now, we want to get away from here."

I learned later that his finery had been borrowed for the occasion.

We went in a "droshke" to the hotel where my parents waited. I was disappointed with the appearance of the streets on the way, and with the hotel — a great deal more than my brother had been with my lightweight clothes, and I told him so.

I was very sad at the sight of my mother. She was suffering greatly with rheumatism and was almost unable to move. She had aged considerably, and had changed so much that I could hardly believe it was she. My father, wearing the American clothes with which we had provided him when he visited us in Chicago, looked fairly well, and, as usual, had a happy and contented expression.

Mother was sitting on a low chair, and I had to kneel on the floor in order to kiss her. She pulled me to her, and started to cry, lamenting, "Was I so sinful that I do not recognize my own child, whom I raised, nurtured and cradled!"

Father and Aron stood beside us with bowed heads. It seemed up to me to say something which would brighten the atmosphere.

"Mother," I said gently, "it is I, and not you, who is to be blamed for your not knowing me. You remember how you always warned us, that if we did not go in the ways of God and follow the dictates of our religion, no good person would recognize us. Now, if you do not recognize me, it must be because I have been wicked."

This remark brought a change in mood, and we all started to smile.

Although physically my mother was not at all the vigorous, strong, healthy and good-looking woman she had been when I last saw her, mentally she was just as keen and clever as I remembered her to be.

We remained one day in Kovno, and then left for Woronowo, where Aron lived with his family. This town, which is a few hours' ride from Wilno, the largest city in Lithuania, did not differ greatly from our little Poniemon and other such small Lithuanian towns. The streets were very muddy — the houses were small and shabby. The people, with a few exceptions, were of the poorest, and spent most of their time praying and hoping for better times. Aron lived in a little frame house, with his wife and children. His oldest son, Abram Herz, who had been recently married, had brought his wife to live there, too. This was about five years preceding his coming to America.

My arrival created quite a stir, especially since I had just come from the Zionist Congress. I was kept busy answering questions about Zionism, America and a hundred other things, and telling my parents and relatives about the other four brothers and their families in Chicago.

Father still delighted to speak of the happy days he had spent with us in America, and on every occasion thanked God that, in his old age, he was well provided for by his children.

My mother, on the other hand, was not particularly happy or satisfied. It was difficult to please her, and she even remarked that, though she had no complaints to make against her sons, she had heard of parents who had received even better treatment from their children.

I tried my best to bring her a little happiness, and told her that when I returned to Chicago, I would propose to my brothers that each year one of us come to visit them, starting with Sam, who was the youngest. Father was overjoyed at this proposal and, with a big smile, exclaimed that such a plan, if it could be carried out with God's help, would cause the greatest happiness that could come to parents.

"Oh, how wonderful that would be!" he cried enthusiastically, acting like a happy child.

But Mother interrupted him, shaking her head morbidly.

"You are still as foolish as you ever were!" she scolded. "You will never learn. Don't you know where you are? Don't you know how old you are? Don't you know what is likely to happen to people of our age any day or any minute? Then why make this silly talk about the pleasure you will have in seeing one of your sons every year?"

The smile left my father's face, and hanging his head like one caught committing a great wrong, he said sorrowfully, "Yes, I think you are right."

I felt very miserable over that little scene, and later, when no one was around, I reprimanded Mother very gently.

"Why did you make that statement?" I asked. "What harm is there for you and Father to live in the happy thought that you will see each year one of your sons? Why be so pessimistic, and talk about death and old age when everything looks so bright and sunny?"

This displeased Mother, and she answered in the tone of a martyr:

"Well, I suppose it is God's will that your parents should live in Russia, and have to depend upon their sons in America for support, and that you should come here to lecture your mother and give her instructions as to what to say and what not to say to your father!"

I stayed on for eight days, and though I did not derive a great deal of comfort from my visit, I was very sad when the time came to leave.

At the time I was there, the little community was split into two parties. It seems that one faction was dissatisfied with the Rabbi of the town and wanted to engage a new one, while the other faction sided with him and wanted him to remain. Aron, though he had practically no tangible means of support, was nevertheless one of the leaders of the town. He sided with the latter group. In spite of the fact that during my visit, he gave me most of his time and attention, he still found time to plan and maneuver in order to draw as many men as possible to his side.

* * *

When I prepared to re-cross the Russian border into Germany, I very nearly encountered serious difficulty. At that time, Jews who had previously emigrated and returned for a visit, were frequently forced to remain. The entire situation was a very deplorable one. Had I not followed the advice of a fellow passenger to speak only English to the officer who examined my passport, I might have been detained and perhaps got into trouble. When at last I crossed the border, I felt greatly relieved. A few weeks later, I was safely back home.

The Chicago Zionists arranged a big meeting, followed by a dinner and reception, on my return. Mr. Zolotkoff was chairman of the meeting. The hall was crowded, and my report, which lasted over an hour and a half, was greatly applauded. Both the Jewish Courier and the English press gave this affair much publicity. The Zionist movement was now going strong. The efforts of world famous personalities who supported the movement were a tremendous factor in its growth.

* * *

I attended in all eight Zionist Congresses, as a delegate. On several occasions, although I did not feel I could spare the time from my family and business affairs to make the trip, my interest in Zionism nevertheless impelled me to do so.

The two Congresses which impressed me most were the one which I attended, in 1901 (which I have already described), and the one I attended in 1903. At the latter Congress, Dr. Herzl, who died about eight months later, was obviously ill. Most of those present knew that he was suffering from a serious heart ailment, but in spite of his condition, he presided over the Congress, sitting with ice bags on his chest and back.

It was apparent to all that he could not have long to live. Yet, certain opponents of his policies had no consideration whatever for the precarious state of his health and criticized and attacked him unmercifully at every session. Chief among these were several of the delegates from Russia. I took it upon myself to call their attention to Dr. Herzl's distressed appearance, begging them to "go easy," as it was evident his life was in danger; but their reply was: "Individuals and ideas have nothing in common. We will fight to the bitter end to gain our point, no matter what happens to one man or another."

When I later heard a speaker describe the current conditions in Russia, I began to understand better the cause for the unreasonable attitude of the delegates. At that particular period, throughout Russia, one heard nothing but expressions of rebellion and protest. Rich and poor, he informed us, men, women and children of all classes and religions, held meetings wherever they could, and the entire population was imbued with the spirit of revolution. Rebellion against Czarism was in the air.

At our Congresses we heard, too often, I am sorry to say, shouts of, "I protest!" In fact, many of the delegates seemed to think it their duty to keep shouting their opposition to all suggestions, in the most senseless manner.

When my brother, Harris, telephoned me one morning in July, 1904, and sadly informed me of the passing of Dr. Herzl, I was not greatly surprised.

"I am afraid," I told him, "that some of the leaders of the Zionist movement have contributed largely to his death."

That my opinion was shared by others was evident at the next Congress which I attended, when many of the delegates asserted that certain leaders, whose names I do not wish to mention, were by their bitter criticism, responsible for cutting short Herzl's life.

I remember the 10th Congress, held in 1911, chiefly because I visited the grave of Dr. Herzl, in Vienna. I was accompanied on this trip by Isadore Goodman, the young son of Max Goodman, a well known real estate dealer of Chicago. Mr. Goodman had requested that I take the boy with me, so that the latter might have the opportunity of learning about the Jews of Europe and especially about Zionism and the manner in which the Zionist Congresses were conducted. Although the boy was very young, I found him to be a good companion, as he was both interesting and intelligent.

When the Congress adjourned, I went with Isadore to Vienna, expressly for the purpose of visiting the grave of our unforgettable Dr. Theodore Herzl. What I felt there — the impression that visit made on me, I put into writing that same afternoon, in the form of a letter to the Daily Jewish Courier of Chicago. The letter, written in Yiddish, was published by them, and was later translated into English. I am reprinting it here:

"I have stood in awe before the scenic splendors of nature and with keen fascination have regarded the relics of famous figures in history; I have climbed the snow-capped Alps, have wandered through old palaces like that of the late Franz Joseph; I have viewed the bed wherein Napoleon slept and in which his son, the King of Rome, the Duke of Reichstadt, breathed his last; I have rested my hand on the chair wherein old Kaiser Wilhelm II sat as he was crowned all-highest of the Deutsches Reich; I have seen the coffins wherein lie a whole troop of German and Austrian royalty; I have seen a host of historical monuments and scenes of surpassing beauty, and have gone blithely on my way — until I stood before the grave of Dr. Theodore Herzl. There I remained lost in deep revery.

"To communicate the sacred illumination which emanates from that simple gravestone, the quickening of the heart it engenders and the penetration it registers in the mind, one would have to be a divinely endowed poet.

"One feels like winding one's arms about the whole of it, only to weep and weep. . . . Unhappy choice of destiny! Poor Herzl! He had everything anyone might desire. He lived like a duke in one of the gayest, pleasure-loving and pleasure-giving capitals of Europe, honored and revered as only a personality like Herzl can be, when all of a sudden, he became aware that he was a Jew . . . and now, I stand meditating before his grave . . .

"He sought to make provision for his people, to give them an equity among the nations, and he provided himself with heart disease as a recompense; he dreamt of a haven of peace for them, and now he dreams there where he lies in the Vienna cemetery; he wished to provide a land for a people and a people for that land, and received a gravestone for himself . . .

"Tears well up in my eyes. Are they tears for a prince in Israel, or are they the tears of cowardice that flow as I turn away from the old peasant guide and from my young companion, that they may not see I shed them? No! By no means are they the tears of cowardice. Rather are they tears of shame! I feel the shame deeply that this man who had sacrificed his all that his people might dream and triumphantly win in the end, was, during his lifetime beset with so many anxieties and such discouragement by a lack of faith among his own for whom he surrendered his health and his peace of mind. Yet there were those who dreamed even as he did, else his vision would never have come to its full fruition.

"I looked upon the grave and saw large wreaths of fresh flowers upon it, around the Mogen-Dovid engraved in the stone. My heart was touched to the quick, seeing that others saw joy and life where I had seen death; those others had brought their gift of flowers while I merely brought my vain gift of tears. I am a Jew and Jews have too long had nothing but tears for the memory of their great men, even for the memory of Dr. Herzl.

"And once more I gazed at the tombstone and at the grave and I thought that in that sod beneath me there lay no dead man, for men like Dr. Herzl do not die. Graves are for the dead alone, while Dr. Herzl truly lives."

Yes, even as I write these lines I murmur "Amen!"

My witnesses are the 450,000 of our people who call Palestine their homeland, and the millions of others throughout the world who look upon Herzl's dream as a vision no longer but as an historic fact that has come to be realized in our own day.

CHAPTER VII

COMMUNAL WORK

As TIME passed I found most of my evenings occupied with community problems. I often remained up until one or two o'clock in the morning, for I found these activities absorbing and inspiring, and my work in this connection gave me a feeling of accomplishment. Most important of all, however, were the Zionist meetings. All of my brothers were members of the organization, and we were all well known. Very often, when we made our appearance we would hear the remark:

"The Horwich brothers (or, the five brothers) are here. Now we can start."

During the year 1902, I received an invitation to attend the annual meeting of the United Hebrew Charities, to which I was a contributor. A Board of Directors was to be chosen at that meeting, and quite unexpectedly, I was nominated (I believe it was by Judge Julian W. Mack) as a director of the board to represent the Jews of the West Side, and was elected. This came to me as a great surprise.

One of the branches of the organization was the Jewish Aid Committee, on which committee I was appointed to serve. Its duties were to receive applications for relief, to examine thoroughly each case and decide what relief should be granted. I found my first meeting with the committee most interesting and instructive. Although it was well attended, I remember only four of those present, namely, Mr. Solomon L. Sulzberger, the chairman, Mr. Louis C. Cahn, Mrs. Mandel and Miss Miriam Kalisky, the executive secretary. This meeting, as well as the general meeting of the United Hebrew Charities, afforded me an opportunity to become acquainted with a group of the so-called "South Side Americanized representative Jews."

I must say that I learned a great deal from them as to how a meeting should be conducted. Mr. Sulzberger, the chairman, was a gentleman in every respect, dignified in appearance, demeanor, speech and action. He was sincere and fair, and when he spoke was brief and to the point. He knew exactly what he wanted to say, and everybody understood what he said. I was associated with him for many years afterward in charitable work, and the longer I knew him, the more I admired and respected him.

At that first committee meeting I attended, Miss Kalisky, the executive secretary, gave a full report of the number of cases receiving help, the number of new cases that had come in, the cases pending, and the amount of money she thought would be required for the following month. Every pending case was then individually discussed and decided upon. There were no arguments and no unnecessary questions asked by anyone present. Everything ran nicely and smoothly, greatly in contrast to the meetings of West Side groups which I had attended.

Being a newcomer, without much experience in mingling with this class of people, I ventured no comments, but sat quietly and listened to the proceedings. In the course of her report, the secretary mentioned a family that required considerable assistance. The husband had been without work for a long time, and the family had been receiving relief for over a year. When members of the committee questioned her as to the possibility of getting a job for the man, or advancing him money to start some kind of little business, Miss Kalisky replied:

"There is no use trying to do anything for him in that line because he is a 'shlemiel' and does not amount to much."

At this I spoke up, asking how many children there were in the family, and Miss Kalisky answered, "Six."

"Well," I remarked, "after all, he is not such a 'shlemiel.' He is good for something, anyhow."

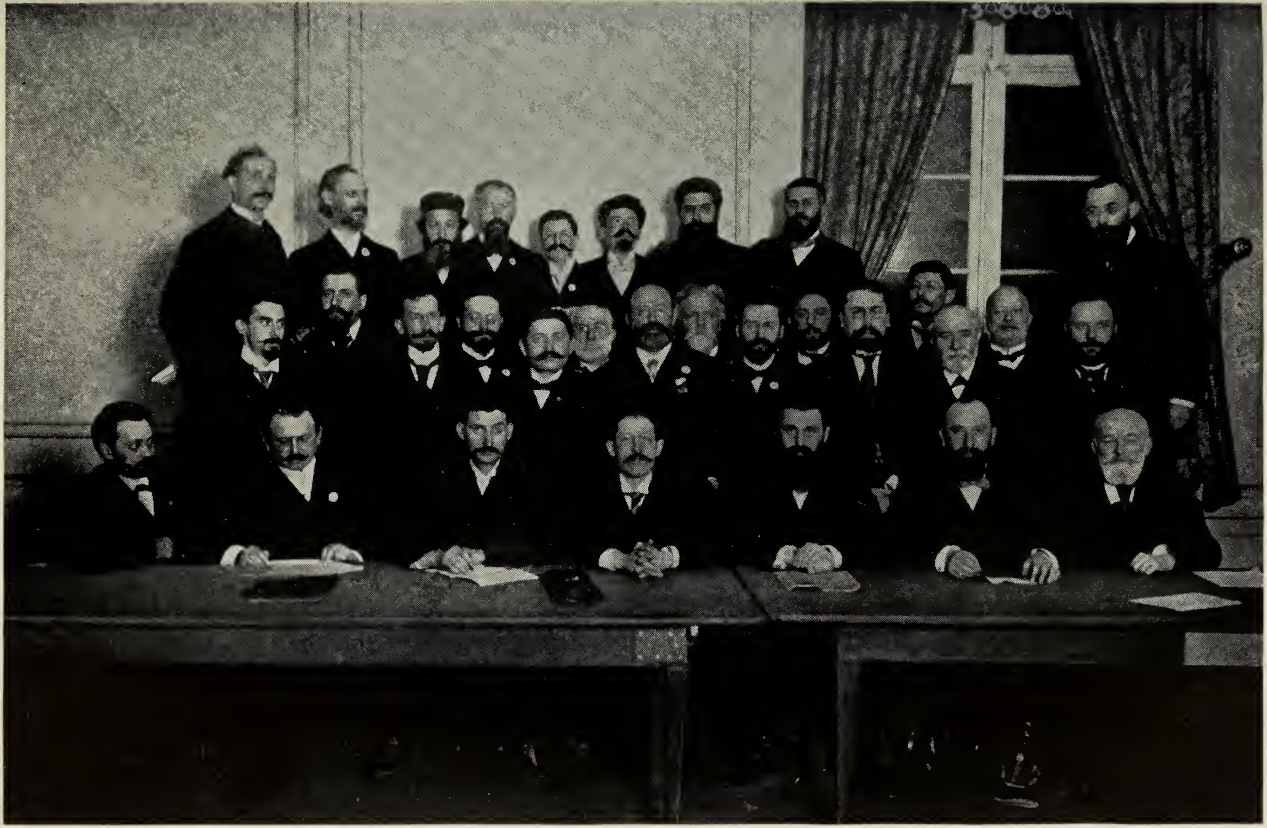
Everybody smiled at this, and Mrs. Mandel kept on giggling as long as the meeting lasted. They all seemed to enjoy my comment, and when the meeting was over, one of the members remarked to me that I must come to all of the meetings, as they needed someone like me to "liven up" the dry proceedings.

Thereupon, I suggested that it might be well for the officers of the committee to attend occasionally some of our West Side meetings — that thus we might learn something from each other. I informed them that the "South Siders" had the reputation of doing charity in the same way they transacted business; that is, being too methodical and dealing only in cold figures, forgetting the sentimental human factors connected with the money paid out for relief.

I had always had heated discussions on this subject with many of my West Side friends. They argued that the help rendered to the poor by the "Americanized" German Jews of the South Side was given without feeling or sympathy — that they placed too much emphasis on system and discipline, which should be disregarded when it came to dispensing charity. To this I would retort that it was up to the poor to decide — did they prefer to be given shelter, food and clothing, without any display of sentiment, or did they prefer sympathy and pity, without any money to buy necessities?

At that time, it was almost taken for granted that the South Siders were the ones to give charity, while we of the West Side were the ones to receive it. In later years, however, as the West Side Jews became more prosperous, they also joined the "giving" class. Today many thousands of them contribute quite liberally to philanthropic organizations, although as a whole their contributions do not equal those of the South Side group.

Besides the work of the Jewish Aid Committee, the United Hebrew Charities raised money, through annual subscriptions, for the maintenance of several important institutions. These were, if



Zionist Leaders at the Fifth Congress, at Basle. At this Congress the Jewish National Fund was organized. Seated in front row, fifth from left is Dr. Theodore Herzl. Author is third from left.

my memory serves me right, the Michael Reese Hospital, the South Side Jewish Orphan Home and the Home for the Aged.

The name was later changed to The Associated Jewish Charities, and some years ago this organization merged with the Federated Orthodox Jewish Charities of Chicago, about which I will say more later. The name was later changed again, this time to the Jewish Charities of Chicago, which is its present name.

* * *

From local Jewish communal problems my attention was suddenly drawn by a tale of horror that numbed the senses.

In the year 1903, the press of the world carried the horrifying news of a terrible pogrom that had taken place at Kishinev. The butchery and the pillaging had lasted three days, and the details were so frightful and revolting that the whole world shuddered. Regarding this occurrence, Dr. Isidore Singer says, in his book, "Russia at the Bar of the American People":

"What happened there was so inhuman, so horrible and so diabolical that no language can aptly describe even a part of the horrors and atrocities!"

At once, upon learning of this catastrophe, I called together a few of our Zionist workers, and we formed a committee of which I was made chairman. Its purpose was to rouse public sentiment and raise money to aid the victims of the pogrom. We organized meetings to be held throughout the city on a certain day. One of the largest gatherings was that held at the Congregation Anshe Kanesses Israel (then known as the "Russische Schul"). Among the speakers at this meeting, at which I presided, were Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch and, if I remember correctly, Judge Julian W. Mack. During the proceedings, I read a letter which I had received from an eyewitness of the massacre. So deeply was the audience affected by this that several of the women fainted, and most of the people present wept.

We raised several thousand dollars, and I forwarded this money to Mr. Kahn Bernstein, who was the official representative of the Zionist Organization at Kishinev.

A larger committee, composed of South Side Jews, was later organized, among its members being Adolf Kraus and Judge Philip Stein. It was called "Ezras Nedochim" (Aid to the Refugees), its purpose being to defray the expense of bringing to this country as many of the survivors of the pogrom as possible. We were quite successful, raising enough funds to bring over a considerable number of refugees.

The stark horror of the calamity had aroused the interest of important personages throughout the country. It was decided that a responsible group should be formed, equipped to act in such emergencies. In consequence thereof, a call was sent out to prominent men in every large community in the country, to come to New York to attend a meeting for the purpose of organizing an American Jewish Committee, having for its object the protection of the civil and religious rights of Jews in any part of the world, whenever necessary. I received an invitation, and attended the meeting. The newly-formed American Jewish Committee consisted of representative Jews from all over the United States, with Judge Meyer Sulzberger as its first president. New York was represented by Mr. Felix Warburg, Mr. Louis Marshall, Judge Meyer Sulzberger, Cyrus Adler, and others; while Chicago chose Mr. Adolf Kraus (who later resigned), Judge Julian Mack, Mr. Julius Rosenwald, and myself.

The American Jewish Committee has been in existence for about thirty-five years, and has proved to be a beneficent force, doing its work quietly, but effectively.

The Committee played an important part in the abrogation of the treaty with Russia, in 1912. From about the year 1890, Jews had been barred from entering Russia, and Jews leaving that country for visits elsewhere were not permitted to re-enter. Many of those discriminated against were American citizens. When in the year 1910, the Russian government refused to admit a prominent American Jewish citizen, the Committee took it upon itself to bring the matter to the attention of the United States Government, recommending abrogation of its treaty with Russia. William Howard Taft was then President.

I was strongly opposed to this action of the American Jewish Committee, and so stated at the meeting at which the matter was discussed, expressing my fear that the Russian government would retaliate by taking punitive measures against the three and a half or four million Jews residing in Russia. While attending the Zionist Congress in Switzerland that year, as a delegate, I discussed the matter with the Russian delegates, and found that the majority of them were opposed to the measure. Dr. Max Nordau, whose opinion was universally respected, told me that while he felt it was a very courageous undertaking on the part of the members of the American Jewish Committee, he feared that sooner or later the Jews would suffer for it. An article by him appeared in "Haint," the largest Yiddish newspaper in Warsaw, Poland, giving the same reasons for his opposition to the proposal, as those I had advanced.

When I returned to this country, I reported these facts at the next meeting of the American Jewish Committee, but I was greatly criticized, and the proposal was unanimously passed, with the exception of my vote. There was now nothing for me to do but bow to the will of the majority and promise to request the United States Senator from Illinois, Hon. William H. Lorimer, to vote for the abrogation of the treaty. I invited the Senator to a meeting on the West Side, where he gave us his assurance that he would do so. When the question finally came before the Senate, it was readily passed, and the treaty with Russia remained in abrogation until the world war, when the Czarist government was overthrown.

After the meeting of the American Jewish Committee, at which I had expressed my opposition, Judge Meyer Sulzberger, the president, called me over, and told me, in the presence of several others, that he considered it impudent of me to have stood up against the opinion of all the other members.

"What did you do for the Jewish people," he asked rather angrily, "that you should take it upon yourself to disagree with the opinion of all?"

I said nothing, but when he repeated his question later, in the presence of another group, I answered: "Well, I have a wife and five children."

The men around us burst out laughing. I thought at first they might be laughing at me, for making such an inadequate reply, but later I learned that the Judge was a bachelor, and these men had thought I knew this, and that my reply was particularly appropriate.

* * *

In the early 1900's, Chicago Jewry was electrified by the news that the famous Schmarya Levin, who had been a member of the short-lived Russian "Duma" (parliament), was to visit this city.

The story of the formation of this "Duma" had created worldwide interest. It seems that after the year 1900 there was considerable unrest in Russia, as more and more of the Russian people were drawn into the Revolutionary movement. About three-fourths of the population, as we were later told by Mr. Levin, became involved, and meetings were held by men, women and children anywhere and everywhere—in gardens, in private homes, in the woods, and even in churches and synagogues. So strong did the movement become that the Czar was finally induced to grant to the Russian people some measure of freedom, and some degree of representation in the government. He granted the people the privilege of forming a "Duma," or parliament, and one of our foremost Zionists, Mr. Schmarya Levin, was elected as a member of that body. After about a year, however, it seems the Czar relented of his liberality, and the "Duma" was dissolved. All its members, especially those who had spoken freely against the Czarist regime, had to leave the country, and Mr. Schmarya Levin was one of those who had to flee for their lives.

I received advance notice from New York that he was planning to come to Chicago, and consulted with Mr. Ginzburg, of the Courier, and Mr. Adolf Kraus, one of our leading Jews, as to how to entertain him and take care of him while here. A great deal of publicity in the general press, as well as in the Jewish newspapers, greeted his coming, which was considered front-page news and created quite a stir. The fact that Russia had gone so far as to permit the formation of a "Duma," and had permitted a Jew to serve thereon, had astonished the world, and everyone was anxious to see and hear Mr. Levin.

Mr. Kraus, who was at that time, I believe, president of the B'nai B'rith, was kind enough to offer him, on behalf of that organization, lodging at the Congress Hotel during the time of his stay. He was with us for about two weeks, and every other day we arranged for him to attend a different meeting or gathering.

On the first Saturday, I took him to the Anshe Kanesses Israel, which was at that time and I believe still is the largest Orthodox Synagogue in Chicago. Of course, everyone eagerly looked forward to hearing him, but I am sorry to relate that on that occasion, his speech was a disappointment. I introduced him as one of the outstanding Jewish and Zionist leaders in the world, and expected that he would tell us about his experiences in Russia and something about the progress of the Zionist movement. However, his talk lasted only about fifteen minutes, and he spoke in Hebrew, which hardly anyone present understood.

He made a far better impression at a meeting which the South Side Jews arranged for him at the Standard Club, where he spoke in German. Dr. Hirsch also spoke at that meeting, likewise in German.

All in all, his visit here was not a happy one. Of the true Russian intelligentsia, he was of a highly nervous temperament and, like most men of that type, was rather self-centered and felt himself superior to the average person. He did not like the well-to-do Jews of the South Side, nor did he have much use for the poor Orthodox Jews of the West Side. I, as chairman of the committee in charge of arrangements, had it "hot and heavy" from him. He did not like the idea of being taken to a "schul," or of being tendered a banquet in a poor Jewish restaurant, or being taken to other places that were strange to him. What he had expected was to encounter here a group of Russian intelligentsia like himself, and that he did not find. However, he did infuse new life into the Zionist movement, which gained greatly by his presence.

Subsequently, Mr. Levin came to this country and to Chicago quite often, and in time he gained the respect and admiration of Zionists and non-Zionists alike. He even succeeded in changing the attitude of Mr. Julius Rosenwald, who was a strong anti-Zionist. Although the latter did not become a Zionist, he did contribute considerable sums for Palestine.

It is of interest that at the banquet we gave for Mr. Levin on Roosevelt Road, during his first visit to Chicago, there were many South Side Jews. It was the first time in the history of the city that wealthy Jews of the South Side had deigned to come to an ordinary, second-floor Jewish restaurant. My nephew, Abram Herz, who operated the restaurant, soon demonstrated that good food and good service are not confined to swanky dining halls.

* * *

In the beginning of the year, 1908, the newspapers announced in screaming headlines that a young Jewish boy, by the name of

Harry Auerbach, had been killed by the Chief of Police of Chicago. According to the reports, this boy was an anarchist and had made an attempt to assassinate the Chief of Police, George Shippey, who had killed the boy in self defense.

I was in New York at the time, and at once telegraphed my brother, Harris, to give me all the information possible, which he did. He informed me that there was great excitement everywhere, especially among the Jews, many of whom were of the opinion that it was a "frame-up." If possible, he told me, I should come back to Chicago at once, to help in solving the case, and two days later I returned.

I found that the boy had a sister by the name of Olga, who refused to talk to anyone. Many newspaper men and representatives of various societies had been to see her, but she would not say anything except that her brother had been murdered. She would collapse whenever she started talking to anyone.

I formed a committee of five and started an investigation. The first step was to secure an interview with Olga Auerbach, and it took me days before I succeeded in convincing her that it was best for her and for the memory of her brother, as well as for the welfare of the Jewish people, to discover the truth and the whole truth. She finally promised to give me all the information she had on the following afternoon.

This was her story: She and her brother were born and reared in Kishinev. There they lived through the bloody pogroms that took place in the year 1903. Soon after this calamity, which horrified the Jews everywhere, they left Russia and came to Chicago. Young Auerbach lived with his sister and a friend in three small rooms. For days and weeks he looked for employment, but could find none. During his search for a job, he became acquainted with a boy, who advised him to go to California, as living was much cheaper there and it would be easier for him to get work. He did not have the fare to California, however, and his friend thought that if he would go to someone with political influence and tell him of his predicament, he might obtain free transportation to Los Angeles.

Auerbach accordingly made inquiries as to who would be the most influential person for him to see, and was advised by someone to see Chief of Police Shippey. Instead of going to the latter's office, where he would be busy and would not be able to talk to him, Auerbach went straight to the Chief's house, arriving early in the morning, before Mr. Shippey left for downtown. There he was killed. His sister insisted that he was not an anarchist, that he knew nothing about political matters, that he did not have any weapon with him at any time, and that he was a frail, nineteen-year-old boy who would not harm a fly.

Our committee, with the aid of many persons interested in social justice, made further investigation and found that what the sister had told us was true — that the poor, innocent boy had been killed through a terrible error. The newspapers gave wide publicity to the sister's story, and expressed doubt as to the word of the Chief of Police that his life had been in danger and he had killed the boy in self defense.

Olga, who was by that time much calmer, asked me to attend the inquest and do everything possible to prove that her brother was innocent of any wrong. With this intention, I engaged a lawyer, who investigated the evidence and found that the Chief of Police had several witnesses ready to testify for him, while there were no witnesses at all for the other side. He advised me, accordingly, to let the matter go and forget about it. When the inquest was held, Mr. Shippey was exonerated.

Interest now centered in the funeral. The people were excited. The newspaper men, of course, were eager to know when and where the funeral would take place. With the assistance of men from the Daily Jewish Courier, I managed to elude reporters and detectives, and we buried the body in the cemetery known as the Jewish Free Burial Ground.

Although the coroner's jury found that the Chief of Police was justified in the killing, the general belief was that the boy was innocent, and this feeling was strengthened when Chief Shippey became ill a short time later, and died in a sanitarium.

During this time, my oldest brother, Aron, was here on a visit. He was amazed at the uproar and excitement that the case had created. He could not understand it. A Chief of Police of a Russian city of over three million inhabitants, like Chicago, he said, had almost unlimited power. The killing of a man suspected of being an anarchist would mean nothing, especially if it was a Jewish boy and the chief claimed his life had been in danger.

"Why," he exclaimed, "in Russia the Chief of Police would have been decorated for his bravery, and no one would dare to say a word about it. Here," he said, "the press had headlines as if it were a national problem."

He could not get over it and kept advising me to keep out of the case, not to be active in it and not to be in the limelight. He thought my life was in danger. When it was all over, he said he now realized the meaning of the saying: "America is a free country," which he had heard so often.

* * *

Aron came twice to this country, to visit us and his children. His first visit was on the occasion of Philip's marriage, and the second time was when the latter's son, Irving, was confirmed.

During his second trip, in 1922, I was acting as chairman of the Chicago branch of the Central Relief Committee of New York, organized to raise funds for the war sufferers of Europe. A national conference was then being held in Chicago, of delegates representing all branches in the country, to determine the quota for the coming year and ways and means of raising it, as well as the different allotments for each country.

I took Aron to several sessions and introduced him to several of the leading participants — men who were personally contributing large amounts and were giving a great deal of time and effort toward helping to raise additional sums, the quota amounting to millions of dollars.

Aron was a husky, good-looking individual, and when I introduced him to Mr. and Mrs. Rosenwald as one of the war sufferers from Poland, they were rather surprised at his fine, healthy appearance.

"If that is the way they look, after experiencing the trials and tribulations of the war," remarked Mr. Rosenwald, "they do not need any help."

To this Aron's son, Philip, who was with us, quickly answered: "He looks well, because his brothers and his sons have already taken care of him."

At the next session of the conference, Mr. Rosenwald spied us, and brought over several of his friends and co-workers to show them how wonderful a Polish war sufferer looked, again remarking that if they all looked like my brother, they did not need help.

I answered, as had Philip: "They only look like this *after* they have been helped — and this man has already been helped by his relatives and friends."

This diplomatic statement made them all smile, and one of the group said: "We ought to have him appear at our meetings, as an example of what our fund raising work is accomplishing."

When my brother left, several months later, I accompanied him to New York, so that I could both see him off and attend a special meeting being held in that city, called for the purpose of hearing the report of a commission which had been sent to Palestine by the so-called "non-Zionist" group. The meeting was held the day after we reached New York, and I took Aron with me.

The well known figure, Louis Marshall, acted as chairman. Each member of the commission, of whom I believe there were five, submitted a report on a different subject, one speaking about the climate and environment of Palestine, another about the agricultural possibilities and the area of the country, another about the relationship between the Jews and the Arabs, and so on. The reports were all very interesting and well received.

During the afternoon session, the question arose: "What is the difference between Zionists and non-Zionists?" Though there must have been half a dozen speakers discussing the subject, none gave a plausible explanation.

When the meeting was over, I introduced my brother to Mr. Marshall, and Aron complimented him on being a second "Moishe Rabenu" (Moses, our leader and teacher). He added, "I am going home, and I will tell our people there what great men you have in America, and that you, Mr. Marshall, are the greatest of them all."

Louis Marshall was truly a great man and was considered the foremost Jew in America for many years preceding his death. A lawyer of national prominence, a scholar and a gentleman, and above all, a statesman, he was loved and respected by all.

Mr. Marshall invited us to tea, and in the course of our conversation, he asked me how I would explain the difference between a Zionist and a non-Zionist.

I told him that some years ago a reader of a Jewish newspaper in New York wrote to the paper, asking that they explain the difference between a speaker and a lecturer. Mr. Leon Zolotkoff, who was writing for the paper at the time, replied to the query that they are both the same, except that a lecturer does not "holler so" when he speaks.

Thus my reply to Mr. Marshall's question was that the only difference between the Zionist and the non-Zionist is that the Zionist shouts louder. I drew an illustration from the meeting that had just ended. The members of the commission who had gone to Palestine, all of whom were non-Zionists, spoke like lecturers. They were distinct, brief, calm and to the point. Then Reverend Masliansky, whom everyone knows, admires and respects, spoke as a Zionist. He agreed with everything that was reported by the commission, but instead of talking, like them, in a calm, quiet manner, he displayed deep feeling, became excited, and shouted at the top of his voice to Mr. Marshall: "You are not a non-Zionist, but a Zionist, a Zionist, and for the third time, a Zionist!"

That, I said, was the only real difference. As long as we were all interested in and working for Palestine, in whatever aspect, it did not matter what we were called.

Mr. Marshall had a good laugh over this. He liked my explanation so much that he made a note of it, saying that he would use this story the first chance he had.

* * *

Up to the time the Zionist movement became a real factor in the Orthodox Jewish community, the leaders of the community had concentrated on but two kinds of organizations — the synagogues and the lodges. The growth of the Zionist movement, however, with its informative meetings, its propaganda and the widespread newspaper publicity, seemed to give these men a wider outlook and an impetus toward new endeavors. It is my opinion that Zionism was responsible for a greater interest in general communal needs, and a desire to do something about them.

Among the men who were thus inspired to serve the immediate needs of their fellow Jews was a Mr. Jacob Cantor.

Mr. Cantor, who is now deceased, was a "kosher" butcher on Canal Street. In a letter which was published in the Daily Jewish Courier, he called attention to the situation of the helpless, aged Jews of the city. He deplored the fact that a good many of them, too old to earn a living and unable to obtain help, were destitute and often without food and shelter. He urged that they be taken care of by the Jewish community, and suggested that a movement be started for the building of a home where these old people could spend the rest of their lives in comfort.

Mr. David Shapiro, who died a few years ago in Palestine, responded to that call. He organized a committee of able speakers to bring this project before the people. He and his committee went from synagogue to synagogue, and from one place to another, explaining their purpose and appealing to the community for help. The response was splendid, and within two years, one of the finest institutions in the country was built for the care and shelter of aged Jews. It was named "Beth Moshav Zekenim," which is Hebrew for "Home for Old People," but it is generally called affectionately merely by the initials, "B. M. Z." In recent years, some clever individual humorously explained that in Yiddish "B. M. Z." stood for "Bobes mit Zeides" (Grandmothers and Grandfathers), and that expression is frequently used.

The Home stands on Fifteenth Street and Albany Avenue, facing Douglas Park, and is famous for its fine living quarters, culinary and hospital equipment and facilities, and the manner of its supervision. The care of the aged in the "B. M. Z." is a delight to the beholder, and the residents manifest their happiness in many ways. The present executive director is Mr. Julius Savit. This was the very first philanthropic institution to be erected on the West Side.

Among the men and women who gave their labor and devotion to this worthy cause were: August Turner, Abraham Margolis, Mrs. Benjamin Davis, Israel Cowen, Isador Segal, Mrs. Julius Stone, Mrs. Joshua Ginsburg, Harris Cohn, Paul N. Lackritz, N. Baumgarten, S. B. Komaiko, George Pines and Maurice Burr.

My oldest son, Arthur, has been one of the directors of the institution for many years. While I served on the Board of Directors, I was not active in its affairs, but did my share through financial assistance.

* * *

Another worthy communal movement which was soon initiated was the building of a home for Jewish orphans. The idea was conceived by Mr. Jacob Levy and with the aid of a few others, including myself, the "Marks Nathan Jewish Orphan Home" was founded.

For several years the orphans were housed in a small place on the Northwest Side, but later a large building was erected on Albany Avenue, near the Old People's Home, facing Douglas Park. I was a member of the building committee and one of the signers of the $50,000.00 mortgage that was assumed.

The Home was named for the Mr. Nathan for whose firm I had worked for several weeks when I first came to Chicago, loading and unloading scrap iron at $1.20 a day. Mr. Nathan, who died, leaving no children, had placed $15,000.00 in trust, to be used for any institution that might be built for the good of the people of the community — and it was decided to apply this money toward the building of the orphan home. Of course, the cost of the present building far exceeded that amount, but in those days, Mr. Nathan's benefaction was considered a very large sum by the Jews of the West Side, and they, therefore, deemed it only right that the building should bear his name.

The Marks Nathan Home is another institution of which the Jews of Chicago may justly be proud.

Mr. Levy served as president of the Home for many years, and devoted a good part of his life to its interests. Mr. Charles Herron, who was then secretary, later became president, and for twenty-five years was head of the institution, which he served faithfully and efficiently, devoting to it a great deal of his time and energy. Both he and Mr. Elias L. Trotzkey, executive director, who has made a specialty of child care, deserve much credit for their fine work in this connection.

The well known Mr. Maurice Goldblatt, of Goldblatt Bros., is now president of the Home, and is carrying on the splendid task. Both he and his brother, Nathan, are known for their generosity on behalf of every philanthropic enterprise. Their rise from poor immigrant boys to prominent merchants of the city has been little short of phenomenal.

A wonderful contribution to the Home was made by Mr. Morris Katz, a friend of mine for many years. He created a $100,000.00 trust fund, its purpose being to provide a higher education for those children of the Home who are qualified and desire to study further. This is the largest single contribution in the history of the Orthodox Jewish community of this city.

While conversing with Mr. Katz, a few years after he had made this magnificent gift, we happened to touch upon the subject, and I remarked that since he had done so much for the Orphan Home, he ought to do something for the Old People's Home. I pointed out that these two institutions, which stood on the same street, within a block of each other, represented the rising sun of life, and the setting sun. It would be most fitting and proper, therefore, that since he had extended a helping hand to the young, he should likewise do something to comfort the old in their last days. He replied, to my pleased surprise, that he had had it in mind, and that he wanted me to go with him some day to the Old People's Home and see what might be needed.

About ten days later, Mr. Katz and I went to visit the institution. As we walked about the premises, Mr. Katz noticed a large piece of ground adjoining the building, which was strewn with rubbish and was quite unsightly. It struck him that this plot could be utilized for a good purpose, and right then and there he informed the superintendent, Mr. Savit, that he would contribute enough money to create there a garden, with trees, grass and flowers, for the old people, and would make a yearly contribution for its upkeep.

If I remember, it was in the spring that we made that visit, and when I returned, a comparatively short time later, the grounds were already a pleasant sight to behold. The old people, men and women, were promenading about or sitting on comfortable chairs and benches, in a beautiful garden, containing trees, walks and fountains.

The garden was dedicated soon afterward, and quite a festive affair was arranged for the official opening. There was a large crowd present, and several prominent speakers had been invited — among them Rabbis, judges and other public personages.

Mr. Katz insisted that I also say a few words on this occasion. I opened my remarks by reminding the audience that the story of mankind had started in a garden. In that ancient garden, mankind had been created — while in this present garden, comfort and pleasure had been created by Mr. Katz for our old men and women. My little speech was haled as the best, and one of the prominent Rabbis, who also spoke there, told me that he was envious because it had not occurred to him to draw that analogy.

Since that time, a garden festival has been held there every year, which is always a beautiful and joyous event. Great praise is certainly due Mr. Katz for the splendid thing he has done here.

* * *

Another great community enterprise was the establishment of the Hebrew Institute. This had its inception through the efforts of the early Zionist group, which in Chicago expanded its activities to the stimulation and encouragement of Jewish culture, education and philanthropy.

At one of the meetings, during the administration of Dr. Halperin, a plan was proposed to erect a center for the boys and girls of the West Side, where they could spend their leisure time in wholesome activities. This was prompted largely by the fact that many of the youngsters were frequenting pool rooms and other such undesirable places.

Mr. N. D. Kaplan was appointed chairman of the committee created for this purpose. A suite of offices was rented in a building on the corner of Blue Island Avenue and Roosevelt Road, and activities were initiated with very satisfactory results. We were, however, greatly in need of financial assistance.

Mr. Julius Rosenwald, who was then recognized as one of the most prominent business men in the city, and who contributed generously to many worthy causes, was visited by the committee, headed by Mr. Kaplan. They explained to him the aims and objects of the organization, and told him what had been accomplished up to that time. He seemed impressed, and one Sunday afternoon came to visit the center, which we had named the "Chicago Hebrew Institute." He saw what we were attempting to do, and expressed gratification and a willingness to help.

Mr. Rosenwald was not satisfied with the quarters, and felt the project should be conducted on a larger scale. We set about trying to find a more suitable place, and soon learned that a convent, located on Taylor Street, and covering a square block of ground, with several buildings thereon, was for sale for the sum of $80,000.00.

We brought Mr. Rosenwald to see the place, and after looking it over, he made a proposition that if we would raise $10,000.00 he would advance $80,000.00, in the form of a mortgage on the property, without interest.

"So get busy," he said to us, "and raise the $10,000.00; and as soon as you turn that amount over to the treasurer, you will receive a check for $80,000.00." The $10,000.00 was to be used for remodeling and for other urgent expenses.

Mr. Rosenwald said we must start raising the money at once, and wanted to know how much I would subscribe personally. My friend, Mr. Kaplan, and I exchanged bewildered glances. I could not imagine what amount I could offer, when he was ready to write a check for $80,000.00.

"Mr. Rosenwald," I said, "your proposition is that you will take a mortgage and not charge any interest. If you would say that you won't charge the principal either," I added jokingly, "then I would have to do a whole lot better than I really can afford."

"Well," said Mr. Rosenwald, "how much would that be?"

My friend, Mr. Kaplan, whispered to me: "Make it $500.00."

Mr. Rosenwald heard this, and said: "I accept. That is fine."

I was in for it. At that time $500.00 was much more than I could afford. It was, in fact, the largest contribution for charitable or benevolent purposes that any man among the West Side Jews had up to that time been called upon to make. When Mr. Charles Schaffner and I later went out asking people for donations of equal amount, for the Institute, no one could believe that I had really contributed so much. We finally convinced Mr. Samuel Philipson and Mr. B. J. Schiff, and they each gave us a check for $500.00. We then interested such men as James Davis, Dr. A. E. Fishkin and Max Klee. The property was purchased, Dr. Fishkin was elected president, and I was elected chairman of the House Committee. Mrs. Goldie Stone, one of our most prominent and active communal workers, became the recording secretary, and still serves in that capacity.

The Chicago Hebrew Institute became the intellectual and social center for Jewish and non-Jewish boys and girls of the neighborhood, as well as for adults. In those days there were no movie houses or other places of amusement where youngsters could go, and the Institute afforded them entertainment of various kinds, as well as educational opportunities. There were playgrounds, with swings, see-saws, slides and other such equipment, as well as sand boxes and play yards for the little ones. The buildings housed a gymnasium, swimming pool, recreation rooms, a branch of the Chicago Public Library, and Sabbath schools. We engaged efficient instructors, who taught the Bible and the reading and writing of Hebrew. We had a fine synagogue, where services were conducted in a modern way by Rabbi Levine, a young American-educated Rabbi whom we brought from New York. There were classes in art and music and various other subjects, to suit the needs and desires of boys and girls of all ages. The Institute proved a godsend for the people of the neighborhood, especially the young men and women.

Some years later, as the neighborhood changed, the institution was moved to its present location at Douglas Boulevard and St. Louis Avenue, in the large, modern building erected for the purpose. Under its new name, the Jewish People's Institute, it has continued to play an important role in Jewish communal life. Mr. Philip L. Seman, who has been superintendent for over twenty-five years, has been tireless in his efforts to provide a large and stimulating schedule of activities, and has achieved splendid success.

* * *

It might be interesting to relate here some of the experiences we had in educating our people on the West Side to contribute to the early Hebrew Institute larger amounts of money than they were accustomed to subscribe for communal purposes. As a rule, collectors would march from house to house, asking for nickels, dimes or quarters. Our institution, however, had to have "big money," and we could not afford to think or deal in small amounts.

Besides being chairman of the House and Grounds Committee, I was also a member of the Fund Raising Committee, and I had my hands full. The work kept me busy almost every evening, and two or three days a week. I had to go out at least two days a week to try to get new subscribers and substantial contributions.

One day, while walking on Madison Street, near La Salle, I met Dr. Emil G. Hirsch. I greeted him and walked on, but he stopped me and asked me in Hebrew: "Whence comest thou?"

To this I responded, also in Hebrew: "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

These are two quotations from the Book of Job — the question of God to Satan, and Satan's reply. Dr. Hirsch expressed delight in the readiness of my answer, and taking my arm, asked me to walk along with him for a few minutes. I told him that I would be greatly honored to do so, and he replied: "I assure you, I would rather walk and talk with you than with a good many members of my congregation." Of course, I thanked him for the compliment.

I then referred to the subject of the Hebrew Institute, and said, jestingly, "I know you are prejudiced against the West Side Orthodox Jews, not knowing them very well. If you would like to get better acquainted with them, why not take a half-day off and go with me out in the Canal Street district to raise money for the Institute."

"A very good suggestion," he replied quite seriously. "I shall gladly do so."

The next day I made an appointment with him, and three days later we were driving around together in a carriage on the West Side, trying to raise money.

The first stop we made was on Twelfth Street (now known as Roosevelt Road). A friend of mine and his wife ran a grocery store there. Entering the little store, we found the wife weighing some herring.

"Where is your husband?" I asked. "I want to introduce him to Rabbi Hirsch."

She dropped the herring and looked at me and my companion in astonishment.

"You mean that this gentleman is the great Dr. Hirsch, from the South Side?"

"Yes," I replied.

She ran to the rear and called her husband, Reuben, and when he appeared, I introduced Dr. Hirsch to him and told him that we wanted to get some money from him. I began to explain what we wanted it for, but he stopped me, saying:

"You don't have to make any explanations. If you come with such a big man, I don't need any explanations. The only question is, 'How much?' "

I told him $25.00.

At this, his wife came running up, and exclaimed: "For heaven's sake, how can we afford that much money?"

She said it in such a pitiful tone of voice that Dr. Hirsch interposed: "The woman is right. Let them give us as much as they think they can afford."

Knowing that she was a very sensible woman and that she had a great deal to say about the family finances, I said to her:

"I know you very well, Rosie, and that you will do the right thing. I will leave it to you."

"Well," she replied, "had you come alone, I would have given you three dollars, but since you have come with Dr. Hirsch, I must give you ten dollars."

"My dear, good-hearted woman," said Dr. Hirsch, "I am not worth more than our friend, Horwich. Indeed, I am worth less. So we will only take six dollars from you, to make it even." But she insisted and handed us a ten dollar bill.

We next stopped to see a small manufacturer on Canal Street, whose name I prefer not to mention. He is now dead, and his relatives have succeeded in developing that little factory into a great concern.

I introduced Dr. Hirsch and told him our mission. It was obvious that he was not very happy over our visit. In a somewhat embarrassed manner, he said to me:

"When you come here, it is always for money, but when you have any business in my line, you go somewhere else."

"Very well," I answered, "I will give you an order right now, with the understanding that thirty per cent of the amount of the order will go for the purpose for which we came here, namely, the Institute."

Our man started to brighten up, and offered ten per cent. Dr. Hirsch settled with him for fifteen per cent. The amount of the contribution came to $19.50.

We went to three other places, where we received small amounts, and then called to see Selig Morris, who was well known on the West Side and was considered one of the large scrap iron dealers of the city. He and I knew each other well.

On the way there, I described him to Dr. Hirsch. I told him that he could not read or write and signed his name with difficulty; that he was very blunt and outspoken and sometimes too forward, but was very honest, straightforward, charitable and religious. He would contribute only to such charities as appealed to him, however, and to no others. I warned Dr. Hirsch that he should not feel offended at anything Mr. Morris might say.

Arriving at his place of business, on Canal Street, we entered his small, uninviting office. There was no place to sit down, and we had to stand until he was through talking to some visitors.

When I introduced him to Dr. Hirsch, I said:

"Mr. Morris, you ought to remember this day as one of the great days of your life," and I mentioned what day and date it was. "You have the honor of being visited by Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, the most outstanding Rabbi in the United States."

"Is that so?" he blurted out. "I know you, you smart aleck, and you know me, so no monkey business!" (Mr. Morris was always using the phrase, "monkey business").

"Dr. Hirsch," he said knowingly, "did not come here to honor me nor anyone else. You brought him here for a purpose, which I know means money. You had better come out with it. What is it you want? But," he interrupted, "before anything else, I will treat you to a drink of French brandy."

He asked the bookkeeper to hand him, through the cashier's window, a bottle of brandy and two glasses. After we all drank, I remarked to Dr. Hirsch:

"Don't for a minute think that Mr. Morris is as bad as he wants us to believe he is. You explain what we are here for, and I am sure that he will not let us go without a check for five hundred dollars."

At this, Mr. Morris jumped up, and shouted: "Is that so! Even if Dr. Hirsch would bring here his entire Reformed Congregation, they could not get five hundred dollars from me!"

In a very pleasant way, Dr. Hirsch explained the significance of the Hebrew Institute — what it stood for and what it intended to accomplish.

"Look here, Dr. Hirsch," said Mr. Morris, when he had finished. "You are supposed to be a Rabbi, but you are not the kind of Rabbi that a Jewish Rabbi should be. Your praying and your preaching are only monkey business. You hold services on Sundays instead of on Saturdays. The men and women sit together. The men sit with uncovered heads, and instead of praying to God, they amuse themselves by listening to the singing of good-looking girls and to your godless preaching.

"If you were asking me for money for a temple, I wouldn't talk to you. I would not even offer you the drink which you just had. But you ask me for something else, to help the boys and girls of the West Side. That sounds reasonable, and although I know nothing about it, I will take your word for it. I know that if I should come to ask you for something, you would not talk to me — so before I give you any money, I want to ask you this — if I do what you ask and give you some money, what can you do for me, or for my synagogue, to which I just have advanced twenty-five thousand dollars?"

To this Dr. Hirsch replied: "As you know, I am not in business, and I haven't any money in banks. I live on my salary, and cannot contribute large sums of money. The only thing I can do for you is to preach, pray or make a speech. If it is agreeable to you, and you wish me to do so, I will come to your synagogue and make a speech, or preach a sermon, or even try to collect money for the synagogue."

"All right," said Mr. Morris, "if you promise to come to our synagogue, and wear a hat and a 'talis,' and make a real speech about religion, about God and His Torah, and no monkey business, I will give you a check."

Dr. Hirsch grasped his hand and said, "I accept."

Thereupon, Mr. Morris took out a little checkbook from his pocket and handed it to me, saying: "Here, you devil, make a check for three hundred dollars."

"Oh, no," I answered, using his phraseology. "No monkey business. It will be five hundred bucks." He signed the check.

Before taking Dr. Hirsch home, I told him that I would like to stop off for a moment at my brother's place, which was nearby.

"Oh," said he, "your brother is in business here? I will go with you and see what kind of a business man he is."

When we stopped in, we found Harris, as usual, reading a book, this time a volume of Heinrich Heine, in German. After greeting him and shaking hands, Harris showed Dr. Hirsch what he was reading, and told him of the comment Heine had once made about Reformed Judaism. He had been asked for his opinion after attending, for the first time, services in a Reformed Temple, whose Rabbi, if I am not mistaken, was Samuel Holdheim.

"The prayers and the singing and the ceremonies and everything else," said Heine, "were exactly as in the Christian German churches. The only thing that sounded Yiddish was Rabbi Holdheim's German."

Dr. Hirsch had a good laugh over this story, and wondered how it happened that he had not heard it before.

They then started on a lengthy discussion regarding Reformed Judaism. Harris insisted that no religion can survive unless one has sincere faith and believes in it with all his heart.

"I am not speaking of fanatics," he said. "They are the exceptions. But Reformed Judaism is not a religion to which its followers can strongly adhere, or in which they can have deep faith."

Dr. Hirsch asked him for some proof of this statement, and Harris was quick to cite an example.

"You know," he said, "that among Orthodox Jews, the Bible or prayer book, or any other book pertaining to the Jewish religion, and printed in Hebrew, is considered sacred. An Orthodox Jew will always kiss the page of such a book before he closes it and puts it away. If an Orthodox Jew should find a loose page of such a book lying around, he will pick it up carefully, treating it as something that is holy, and put it in a proper place. But that is not the case with you Reformed Jews."

"How do you know that is true?" asked Dr. Hirsch.

"I will prove it to you one hundred and fifty times right now," said Harris. "You see over there," he continued, pointing out of the window, "a junk shop owned by a man named Satavsky. He makes a specialty of buying all kinds of paper and old books, and I have an agreement with him that whenever he has any old books, to let me know. I have bought from him a great many books in this way. Of course, most of them have been quite badly torn and in poor condition. But last week, I was surprised to have him tell me that he had a large number of new books, and I bought them for but a little more than he would get for them as waste paper. They cost me about two cents each. If you will please come into the other room, I will show them to you."

Dr. Hirsch followed him, and was greatly surprised to see there a hundred and fifty Jewish Union Prayer Books, such as are used in all the Jewish Reformed Temples.

"There you see the difference," said Harris. "You couldn't find an Orthodox prayer book in a junk shop anywhere in the United States."

I thought Dr. Hirsch might feel offended, but he laughed good-naturedly and said: "Next Sunday I will preach a sermon on this."

* * *

Gradually the Jews of the West Side became more and more interested in politics, until one heard everywhere political matters discussed in Yiddish, as well as in English. The majority were strongly sympathetic towards the Republican Party. Several of the West Side Jews entered into active political work and held office successfully.

A Democratic leader and the representative of the Bohemian and Jewish voters of several of the wards of the West Side, was a Bohemian Jew by the name of William Loeffler. His chief assistant in this work was another Bohemian Jew — Adolph J. Sabath. Both were greatly liked, and became very popular in their district. Mr. Sabath was subsequently elected to the Municipal Court, and some time later was elected Congressman of his district, being continuously re-elected to the present time. A brother of Congressman Sabath, Joseph Sabath, was also elected to the Municipal Court and later to the Circuit Court, to which he was re-elected and over which he is still presiding. I am happy to say that these two brothers are considered to be among the best public officials in this city. During their entire career, no fault has been found with them, and they are admired and respected by all who know them.

I cannot continue without mentioning the two outstanding Chicago Jews in public life — Judge Samuel Altschuler and Governor Henry Horner. The former served with high honor on the Federal bench for over twenty years. When he resigned, because of advancing age, it was to the regret of all who knew him, and his resignation was accepted with reluctance. It is rarely that one finds a man so honorable, wise and just, and so greatly beloved, as Judge Altschuler.

Our popular Governor Horner is another man of whom we are justly proud. As Judge of the Probate Court of Cook County for about twenty years, he served with great credit to himself and to the community. His candidacy for the governorship was received with great applause by people in all walks of life, and he was elected by a large majority. During the campaign for his second term, in 1936, he had formidable political opposition, but so generally was his merit recognized that he was victorious in spite of this obstacle. He is generally conceded to be one of the finest governors Illinois has ever had, and there have been very few to find fault with his administration. I am particularly gratified by his success, since I have earnestly worked for him from the very beginning of his political career.

Both Judge Altschuler and Governor Horner have always identified themselves with every movement concerning the public welfare.

The strongest Republican leader in the early days was Mr. William Lorimer. Assisting him was Mr. A. J. Harris, a Russian Jew, who was just assuming leadership over the Jewish Republican voters of the West Side. Mr. Harris was several times elected alderman of his ward, and later was elected Clerk of the Criminal Court.

William Lorimer, who was a clever politician and straightforward individual of attractive appearance, had great influence over the Jewish voters of the West Side. He was liked by all who knew him, and was considered very reliable. However, he was a strong fighter against any opponents, and he made his greatest mistake when he undertook to fight the Chicago Tribune. The controversy lasted for years, until the Tribune proved victorious. As a consequence, Mr. Lorimer lost his seat in the Senate.

Mr. Lorimer had some time previously opened two banks — one in the downtown section, on LaSalle near Monroe; and the other on the West Side, on the corner of 12th Street (now Roosevelt Road) and Ashland, which was then one of the most desirable locations in that vicinity. Because of his great political following and his many friends and admirers, Senator Lorimer did a fine business from the day he opened. Unhappily, his ouster from the Senate affected his banks, which immediately went into a decline, and within a few months were closed.

The depositors of the West Side bank called a meeting and decided to apply to the courts for the appointment of a receiver, naming me as their choice. I was then the owner of a small private bank on the corner of Roosevelt Road and Blue Island Avenue, which was managed by my son-in-law, Mr. Bernard Jadwin.

My appointment as receiver of Lorimer's Ashland & 12th Street Bank took place in October, 1915. I immediately checked over the books. When I saw the names and the small individual deposits, I did not feel it right to charge these people any receiver's fees, and though many of my friends thought I was foolish to do so, I insisted on giving my services gratis.

My legal representative was Mr. LeRoy Brown, of the firm of Brown, Fox & Blumberg, whom I found to be one of the finest and most honorable lawyers I have known. He took care of every detail, having always the interest of the depositors in mind. The deposits totaled close to a million dollars, and when the receivership was wound up, the depositors were paid over seventy cents on the dollar. This, I was informed, was a record for bank receiverships.

* * *

A few years after this experience, I was surprised to receive a visit from Judge Thomas F. Scully (then judge of the County

Court), and Dennis Egan, Secretary of the Board of Election Commissioners. They had come to ask me to serve as the Republican member of that Board, which was composed of three members. Since Judge Scully was a Democrat, he had the right to appoint two Democrats, but the third member had to be a Republican. I accepted the appointment, and was afterward informed that Judge Scully had considered three different Jews for that office, but upon consulting with several of the leading Jews of the city, it was decided that I should be chosen. I served on the Board of Election Commissioners from December, 1914, to December, 1920.

The other two members of the Board, two Democrats, were August Lueders, a German, and Frank Rydzewsky, a Pole. They were both fair and honorable, and we seldom disagreed. When a disagreement did occur, we called in Judge Scully to decide the matter, but he generally told us that it was his rule not to interfere with the Board, and that we would have to fight it out among ourselves.

In 1927 I was appointed by Mayor Thompson as a member of the board of trustees of the Policemen's Annuity and Benefit Fund of Chicago, and served until July, 1931. When I left, the incoming board voted a resolution, expressing its thanks and appreciation for the "splendid services rendered conscientiously and generously" by me as trustee of that board.

Shortly after this time, a serious difficulty arose in the West Side community, and as usual, I was called upon for advice and assistance. It was during the prohibition era, and some irresponsible parties had taken advantage of the laws permitting the sale of sacramental wines. The entire Orthodox Jewish community was aroused.

After working on the problem for several weeks, a compromise was reached. It was agreed that no sacramental wine was to be handled at all, by anyone, thereafter, and that what had happened should be forgotten.

* * *

On the way home from the 10th Zionist Congress, during the ocean crossing, I turned my thoughts to the communal problems that would await me on my return to Chicago. I pondered chiefly the situation of the various philanthropic institutions and organizations of the West Side, and arrived at the opinion that it would be best to follow the methods used by the South Side Jews, who had adopted an excellent system. Instead of having each separate enterprise raise its own funds, they had an organization which took it upon itself to raise all the money needed by all their institutions and philanthropic groups. This organization secured the required funds through annual subscriptions of its members, who pledged certain amounts.

As already related, we, on the West Side, had an Old People's Home, an Orphan Home, and a "Kosher" Hospital (The Maimonides Hospital), as well as several "immediate" relief societies and a number of Hebrew Schools. Each individual group raised money by sending collectors from house to house, receiving contributions from five cents up. This system was very unsatisfactory, and the collection and distribution of money was in a chaotic state. I came to the conclusion that in the interest of efficiency, we, too, ought to form a single organization, which would be responsible for raising all the funds required for all of our philanthropic organizations and the maintenance of all the charitable institutions on the West Side.

I realized that any attempt to change the existing system would meet with a great deal of opposition, especially from the officers of the various groups and from the men who went around collecting. In order to make a living from the nickels and dimes they gathered every day, these collectors had to retain between thirty and forty per cent of the intake. Thus the expense of raising the funds was out of all proportion. Another evil of the system was the competition between the officers of the various groups, each of which wished to retain its independence. I anticipated trouble from these sources, but never imagined I would encounter as much opposition as I did.

I lost no time, but shortly after returning home called a meeting of those of our active communal workers who I thought would be interested in my plan, for the purpose of laying it before them, and acting upon it. Among those present were Messrs. Samuel Philipson, A. S. Roe, Harry M. Fisher, H. A. Lipsky, of the Daily Jewish Courier, S. J. Rosenblatt and Max Shulman. We decided at that meeting that an organization such as I proposed should be formed. It was to be called the Federated Orthodox Jewish Charities of Chicago, its aim and object being to raise enough money to support all of its affiliated institutions and philanthropic groups.

During my varied experience in business, social work, politics and other endeavors, I had encountered plenty of trouble and hardships and disagreeable incidents; but the year and a half during which, in conjunction with others, I endeavored to induce the several philanthropic organizations of the West Side to become members of the Federated Orthodox Jewish Charities of Chicago, was a most unpleasant period. It was the most thankless and most difficult task I had ever had to tackle.

There were about fifty collectors who made their living gathering funds, and these men were naturally enough strongly opposed to my plan. Some of the officers of the institutions also were very inimical toward me, as they were afraid of losing their leadership and independence of action through the proposed change. I was criticized and abused on all sides. But I kept on arguing and debating, attending meetings almost daily, until we finally succeeded in completing the organization. Among others, we had the support of Mr. Julius Rosenwald and Mr. A. G.

Becker, and, of course, the support of the Jewish Courier. Even the English press often commented favorably on what we were trying to accomplish. Our first year's subscriptions amounted to around a hundred and twenty thousand dollars, of which we collected about eighty-five per cent.

I was president of the organization for two years, during which time Mr. David P. Pollack was executive secretary. I then induced Mr. James Davis, who had served as a director of the organization since its inception, to become president. This was in accordance with the policy I always pursued in such matters. After I had started an organization or movement and had placed it on a sound foundation, I would relinquish the leadership to some responsible member, continuing my interest in the work of the group as a member of the Board of Directors and a contributing member.

The Federated Orthodox Jewish Charities of Chicago continued for ten years. Then, by agreement of the leaders of each section, the West Side and South Side organizations amalgamated, under the name of the Jewish Charities of Chicago, which took over the responsibility of raising money for all the charitable institutions of the city. I believe Chicago was the first city to introduce this method of financing philanthropic enterprises. The Jewish Charities of Chicago has become a model for Jewish and non-Jewish organizations throughout the country, and its method of raising and distributing funds has been put into practice in New York and many other cities. The Jewish Charities of Chicago now raises about one and a half million dollars every year. The cost of raising this money amounts to only about three per cent, whereas under the former system the cost was about thirty-five per cent of the sum collected. The similar organization in New York City, I understand, raises between five and six million dollars a year.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE FOR DR. NAHUM SOKOLOW ON ONE OF HIS EARLY VISITS TO CHICAGO

Sitting, left to right: H. Steinberg, H. Waiss, Bernard Horwich, Nahum Sokolow, Max Shulman, Samuel Ginsburg and Benjamin Perlstein.

Standing, left to right: B. A. Antonow, H. L. Meites, D. P. Pollack, Bernard Shulman, Meyer Abrams, Harris Horwich, Jacob Miller and Jonah Fisher.

In this connection, I must mention Mr. Samuel A. Goldsmith, Executive Director of the Jewish Charities of Chicago, who came here from New York in 1930. No one envied him his job, as he took charge soon after the beginning of the "depression," but he managed the affairs of the organization with commendable efficiency during the trying years that followed. He introduced many worthy reforms and increased the number of affiliated institutions. He is well liked and well thought of by all those connected with the organization, and has established a reputation for himself as a forceful and convincing orator.

Deserving special mention, also, is Miss Augusta Shapiro, office manager of the Jewish Charities. She entered communal work in Chicago during the time I was acting as chairman of the Central Relief Committee for War Sufferers. Soon afterward she was offered a position in the office of the Jewish Charities of Chicago and has been with that organization ever since. Miss Shapiro is an outstanding personality in community work in this city. She knows almost everyone, and everyone knows her. Anyone seeking information about any phase of communal activity applies to her.

Among the many people whom we called on for contributions were Mr. and Mrs. Meyer Schuman, and Mr. Meyer Berry. I mention them here, not so much because of the size of their contributions, which were in proportion to what they could afford to give, but because, in contrast to most others, their reception of us was always pleasant and cordial. They never turned us away empty-handed.

Of invaluable help to the Jewish Charities over a long period of years has been Mr. Ludwig Stein. Disregarding his own comfort and convenience, he has devoted almost all his time to interesting new members and raising funds for the organization. He is ever the gentleman, and I have always enjoyed working with him in this field.

Throughout all these years, and during all its changes, from the United Hebrew Charities to the Jewish Charities of Chicago, I have been a member of the Board of Directors and active in its affairs. However, about two years ago, feeling that I was advancing in years, and since my health was not of the best, I thought it expedient to resign and make room for a "younger and better man." Accordingly I sent my resignation to the president, who accepted it reluctantly. I was very pleased when, in order that I remain connected with the organization, the Jewish Charities passed a special provision, electing me Honorary Vice President for life.

In my files I find the following letters that passed between Mr. Frank L. Sulzberger and myself on that occasion:

November 16, 1937.

Mr. Frank L. Sulzberger, President,
The Jewish Charities of Chicago
130 N. Wells Street,
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Mr. Sulzberger:

Owing to advanced age and failing health, I cannot properly perform my duties to the Jewish Charities of Chicago and feel that a younger and more active man, who can accomplish better results, should take my place.

I, therefore, respectfully tender my resignation as vice-president and director, which resignation you may accept at your pleasure.

Should the office of the Charities at any time feel that I can be helpful by calling on some people, I shall be glad to do so, if at all possible.

With my highest regards to your good self, our executive director and board of directors, I am, with my best wishes for the continued success of our worthy organization,

Respectfully yours,
Bernard Horwich

November 23, 1937

Dear Mr. Horwich:

I was quite unhappy when I received your letter of November 16 saying you wanted to resign from the Jewish Charities Board, because I knew the reason for it was you felt you were not able to be as active as you would like to be and you thought you ought to make way for somebody who could be more active.

Understanding your wishes in the matter, I read your letter to the Board last night. The Board was unanimous in feeling that the Jewish community could not afford to have you disassociated with the Charities, that your standing in the community, your many years of active work in the Charities could not be spared.

At the same time they wanted you to feel that your membership on the Board should not seem to you a burden, but that you should be able to come to meetings or stay away as your health and your pleasure permitted, and you were unanimously elected an Honorary Director and Vice-President by Board action last evening.

I think I can say to you that you would have been more than pleased to have heard the expressions of deep and genuine affection and esteem from the various members of the Board on which you have sat for so many years.

I want you to know that I concur fully in the opinion of the Board that you cannot be spared from its councils, and that at the same time you should be spared from its obligations, and I hope you will agree to accept this honorary appointment.

With my own best wishes, I remain,

Sincerely yours,
Frank L. Sulzberger
President

* * *

I cannot refrain from saying a few words about the men with whom I have been associated in this work for many years.

Since the membership of the various succeeding Boards of Directors kept changing, it is difficult to recall the names of all the splendid workers in this cause, but I do at least want to list those outstanding men who served as presidents of the organization, after the merging of the West Side and South Side groups.

First among these was Mr. Julius Rosenwald, who was nationally known for his philanthropy and lifelong interest in social welfare.

Succeeding him as president was Mr. Charles Rubin, who was an excellent worker and a fine gentleman.

Mr. Rubin was followed by Mr. Samuel Deutsch, who did outstanding work as president of the organization.

These three men, alas, are no longer among the living.

Next to serve as president was young Alfred K. Foreman, who was a member of the well known firm of Foreman Brothers Banking Company.

Succeeding him as president, was Mr. Sol Kline, one of the finest and most sensible men with whom I have ever come in contact.

The next president was Mr. Frank L. Sulzberger, the son of Mr. Sol Sulzberger, whom I have mentioned before in my narrative. The saying, "like sire, like son," certainly applies in this case. Frank L. Sulzberger resembles his late father in every respect, even in physical appearance. He is unassuming and a sincere and unremitting worker, and in his speech is always brief and to the point. He is poised and cultured and is well liked by all who know him.

I do not have the privilege of knowing well the present president, Mr. Lester N. Selig, but from the few times I have met him and from the little correspondence I have had with him on matters concerning the Jewish Charities, I am fully convinced that he is a worthy successor to those worthy men who came before him.

CHAPTER VIII

LEADING CHICAGO ZIONISTS

SINCE Chicago was the first city in the United States actively to embrace Zionism and to send a delegate to the First Zionist Congress, it seems proper to mention here those Chicagoans who were most active in this work — men who gave unstintingly of time, effort and money and helped to build the organization to its present standing. Several of these pioneers and pillars of the movement are, alas, no longer among the living.

Among these men was my own beloved brother, Harris. I have written a great deal about him, I know, and it may not seem modest on my part to take up so much of my story with him. But all those who knew him will agree with me that no amount of praise would be too much.

Harris Horwich, I can say, was the foremost exponent of Zionism in this country. With regard to the Jewish people, he was interested in two matters. The first was Zionism, in all its phases — religious, cultural, political, economic or nationalistic. His second consideration was the ethical life of the Jew. Harris desired that every Jew should lead such a clean, moral and ethical life that our critics would have no fault to find.

He would assert that the Jews in Palestine were the first to abolish idolatry and adopt the idea of one God. It was in Palestine, he proclaimed, that the religions of Judaism and Christianity were born, and the ideal of brotherly love and humanitarianism was developed, taking the place of barbarism and brutality. Palestine, he preached, was the first place in the world where people were taught a humane attitude toward slaves and thus was started the idea of abolishing slavery. He reminded the people that the religion which gave the command to work "six days in the week — but the seventh should be a day of rest for man and beast" originated in Palestine. If it were not for the Jews and the Bible and Palestine, Harris claimed, people would still live like barbarians and have no concept of a finer way of life.

"For all this," he said, "the Jews have suffered for the last two thousand years and have been oppressed by an ungrateful world."

Now, therefore, since we have a chance to regain that country, he would argue, it is our sacred duty to do all in our power to restore Zion to the Jewish people.

Harris never overlooked an opportunity to talk Zionism, in season and out of season, in places where he was welcome, or in places where his hearers were hostile.

Once he and I were invited by a friend to attend a political meeting held in a Jewish neighborhood. We listened to several speakers, one of whom shouted at the audience:

"I see that most of you have come here from countries where you were oppressed and persecuted by the monarchs of those countries — but here you have no kings and no queens. Here you are the kings and your wives are the queens!"

When he finished, Harris asked for the floor, and before the chairman could speak, my brother was on the platform.

"The last speaker told us," he exclaimed, "that here we are kings and our wives are queens — but the trouble is, we are kings to the extent that anyone who feels like it can declare war on us.

"It is true," he explained, "that here we are equal before the law and are supposed to be protected, yet any hoodlum on the street can molest us when he thinks we are not strong enough to defend ourselves."

Harris went on for a while in that strain, and ended with the statement: "When the Jews shall have a country and a government of their own, in Palestine, we shall have an organized power to speak for us and command the world's respect."

Another time, when we attended a Socialist meeting on the West Side, Harris took the floor and boldly told the audience that they were wasting their time and money in those activities.

"This country," he admonished them, "is strongly democratic and will never adopt Socialism. Why not instead," he queried, "advocate and preach Palestine and Zionism? When we have our own land, our own people and our own government, we can try out Socialism, and if it works well in Palestine, then other countries may follow our example."

The next man I should like to mention in this connection was Leon Zolotkoff. Conservative in his thinking and writing, he tried to prove through reasonable arguments, why Palestine belongs to the Jews. "It is true," he said, "that they lost it two thousand years ago, through no fault of their own, but because they were robbed of it. The Jews have never given it up. They have continued to claim it, praying to God and to all the nations of the world to return Palestine to them.

"Jews have always been there," he argued, "in larger or smaller numbers. They have never abandoned it, and if they have it restored to them and become an independent nation, they will prove to the world that the accusations against them are all untrue.

"If the Jews are largely traders and shopkeepers," Mr. Zolotkoff asserted, "it is because these occupations have been forced upon them, all other fields being closed to them. Not permitted to own land, and driven from one country to another, they could not become agriculturists, but had to make a living by whatever means they could. Once they are established in their own country," he prophesied, "they will prove to the world that they can be farmers and till the soil, just as any other people."

His predictions have come to pass, as is evidenced by the wonderful work the pioneers have done in Palestine in reclaiming and tilling the once barren land.

The third devoted worker for Zionism in this city was Mr. M. Phillip Ginzburg, who was one of the early group of Russian "intelligentsia." Though strictly Orthodox, he had a modern outlook. The cause of Zionism was to him of paramount importance. As the publisher of the Daily Jewish Courier, he gave invaluable publicity to help further Zionism in Chicago, and many midwestern states.

Fourth on my list I place the well known Max Shulman. He joined the Zionist Organization about seven or eight years after it was started. He was then a young lawyer, with a great deal of enthusiasm for Zionism and an interest in many other community problems. Mr. Shulman served as Secretary of the Zionist Organization for several years and then became President, serving as head of the movement, off and on, for nearly thirty years. During the period of his activity, the movement spread to other midwestern states, including Michigan, Indiana and Wisconsin.

Our well known American Zionist leader, Mr. Louis Lipsky, wrote of Mr. Shulman as follows: "For many years, when Zionism was a seed that had to be nurtured with personal devotion, Shulman was the most ardent personality in the Midwestern scene. He advocated Zionism under all circumstances and at all times, and this made him one of the outstanding Zionist personalities in Chicago. . . . He was a sticker and worker and stayed on the job until the day of his death."

Next among the pioneer workers for Zionism was Elias Epstein, a cigar manufacturer. Possessing good common sense, sincere and systematic in everything he did, he was an asset to the movement, and should be remembered as one of our best workers.

Another devoted Zionist was Mr. M. Sider, who was a Talmudist and Hebrew scholar. An enthusiastic worker, he was prompt to perform every duty assigned to him with great energy and love for what he was doing. He was active in the movement for about thirty years before his death.

One of the very first persons to attend Zionist meetings, and a man who gave sound advice with regard to organizing the work and expanding it, was Mr. B. A. Antonow.

I would like to make special mention here of a man who was loved and admired by all who knew him, namely, Mr. Samuel Philipson. Starting out as a clerk in the dry goods business, he worked himself up until he became an important wholesale merchant. He was always known for his honest and straightforward business dealings.

Although Mr. Philipson attended almost every Zionist meeting, he was quiet and unassuming and seldom participated in the debates and discussions, giving his opinion only when asked for it. He was very charitable and was a large contributor, not only to the Zionist cause, but to almost all philanthropic institutions and organizations in the city.

Before the "depression," he was a wealthy man, but when he passed away a few years ago, there was very little left of his fortune. So honorable a man was he that though he might have settled with his creditors for a great deal less than his liabilities, and kept something for himself, he refused to do so. There is not a man in the city who lost a dollar through him, and there is hardly a Jew in Chicago who did not know him and who does not respect his memory.

It was in the year 1912, I believe, that we were happy to receive in our midst Judge Hugo Pam, a jurist and orator of note. He was one of the most forceful speakers for Zionism, and when he addressed a meeting, his audience was with him from beginning to end. Every word he uttered was spoken with sincerity, force and conviction. He was indeed a great help to the movement.

Just when the World War broke out, there came to Chicago a young man who was known here before his arrival, namely, Dr. S. M. Melamed, a brilliant journalist, author and philosopher. He had edited a paper in London, and had then come to New York. Shortly afterward, he became editor of the Daily Jewish Courier of Chicago.

An accomplished linguist, he wrote and spoke French, English, German, Hebrew and Russian, and he was considered one of the most forceful writers of our time. His articles and editorials on Palestine were unique. He wrote many books of note, among the best known being his book entitled "Spinoza and Buddha," published by the University of Chicago press.

Dr. Melamed remained in Chicago for some sixteen or seventeen years, before moving to New York. Associated with him here as co-editor was a Mr. Peter Bayarsky, and through their paper, these two men kept Zionism before the public day in and day out, maintaining their interest as long as they lived.

Another fine man who helped to spread Zionism was Philip P. Bregstone, who was, intellectually, a "jack-of-all-trades." He was a lawyer and assistant judge of the Probate Court, and a lecturer, journalist and author. His book entitled, "Chicago and Its Jews," was his last literary effort before his death. Soon after the book was published, a banquet was given in his honor by some of the well-known Jews of the West Side. Among the speakers were Rabbi Gerson B. Levi and Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof.

Mr. Bregstone gave all the time and energy he could spare to the cause of Zionism. It was to the great sorrow of his many friends that he suddenly passed away in middle life.

Mr. H. Levin, a member of Levin Brothers Wholesale Grocers, was also an important figure in Zionism. He and I were called the "dry, practical men" of the movement. Mr. Levin, who had a fine mind and was quite a scholar, proved his practical faith in Palestine by giving up his business and moving there with his family. This was, I believe, about fifteen years ago. He purchased land there, built a house, and embarked in the finance business, helping poor farmers in Palestine to become self-sustaining by advancing money to them as needed. He died a few years ago, and his widow and son are still there.

Most of these whom I have mentioned were also ardent workers with me in various philanthropic enterprises, as I have indicated in other parts of this book.

I am now pleased to mention several men who happily are still here and still active, and who are very much interested in Zionism, as well as all other causes involving the welfare of the community.

Among them is Mr. H. L. Meites, who started out in Chicago as an apprentice in a printing shop. A few years later, he had established himself in that business, and later founded the Chicago Jewish Chronicle, which is considered to be one of the best weekly Jewish publications in the city. Mr. Meites is known as a man of original ideas and plans. As a worker for Zionism or any other community enterprise, he always has something new to propose. His jottings in the Chronicle, and his opinions expressed in that paper on any subject, always give the reader something to think and talk about. His book, "The History of the Jews of Chicago," is considered a masterpiece, and anyone interested in the history of the city should read it.

About six years ago, Mr. Meites was appointed Superintendent of the Water Department of Chicago. In this connection, he has become known to almost every municipality in the United States. He has effected such improvements as to enable the water department to save annually between two and three hundred thousand dollars. Very often he is invited to other cities that seek his advice on how to systematize and simplify the administration of their water departments.

Not long ago, a luncheon was given in his honor, in recognition of the very able services he has rendered the Zionist movement, as well as all other philanthropic undertakings in this city, during the last forty years. It was attended by many persons of prominence, each of whom praised Mr. Meites for the good work he has done.

Judge Harry M. Fisher, another of our prominent Jews, started out in Chicago as a young boy working in a factory. He studied law in the evenings, was admitted to the Bar, and became a judge. He is said to possess one of the best legal minds on the bench, in this city. There is not a movement or undertaking of any kind concerning the welfare of the Jewish community in which his name does not appear among the first. With his keen mind and brilliant oratory, he might indeed have been the leader of the Jewish people in this city had he abided by one of the sayings of our Jewish sages: "Ye wise men, be heedful of your words."

I must not forget to mention a man who has given more time and energy to community problems than to his own affairs. I refer to Mr. S. B. Komaiko. Coming to Chicago as a boy he at once interested himself in Zionism and all other movements relating to Jewish welfare. After a few years, he went into the insurance business, and has become quite prominent in that line. Although it is a business that requires all one's time, Mr. Komaiko manages to spend many hours in writing articles and short stories for various newspapers and publications, such as the New York Morning Journal, the Chicago Daily Courier and The Advocate. He always was and is still a devoted Zionist and ardent worker for everything Jewish. Mr. Komaiko's fine personality, his enthusiasm and his ability to say the proper word at the proper time, make him a valuable asset to the Jewish community.

Mr. Komaiko has a large acquaintanceship among non-Jews, and he takes advantage of every opportunity to bring about a better understanding between Jew and Gentile.

It was due to a large extent to his efforts that Lithuania (which is his native country, and mine), became an independent state. The Lithuanian government has on several occasions acknowledged the services Mr. Komaiko rendered in this connection, which have redounded to the benefit of the Jews in that country.

Mr. N. D. Kaplan became interested in Zionism and in other communal work when still a boy. He became a lawyer, and demonstrated his fine character, common sense and sincerity in everything he did. After working here for the cause of Palestine for a great many years, he left for that country with his wife and two children, who are still there. It was he who interested Mr. Julius Rosenwald in the Hebrew Institute, which is one of the outstanding institutions of Chicago.

One of the most important acquisitions of the Zionist movement was Judge Julian W. Mack, with whom I did not become personally acquainted until about 1902 or 1903, although I had often heard of him prior to that time. A fine young man, American-born, of German-Jewish extraction, he was a lawyer and a university graduate, and was interested in welfare work. He was connected with a committee for social welfare on the West Side and was one of the organizers of a society known at that time as the Maxwell Street Settlement. He became interested in the Zionist movement about the time that Justice Brandeis made known his interest in this movement.

I was introduced to him after his nomination as Judge of the Circuit Court and was asked by his friends to support his candidacy, to help secure his election. There was at that time, if I am not mistaken, already a Jewish judge on the bench, by the name of Philip Stein, who was a native of Germany. He was a well known lawyer, a member of the firm of Kraus and Stein.

I was pleased at the prospect of having another Jew on the bench, one who was a loyal and idealistic American citizen, and who understood the West Side Jews. Though Mr. Mack was very young for such a responsible office, he impressed everyone as being in every respect reliable, sincere and trustworthy. Whatever he said was clear and to the point, and it was apparent that he meant exactly what he said.

As I have stated before, the Zionist leaders in those days were accused of many offenses, among them that our motives were chiefly political and that we were "cheap politicians." I was, therefore, in doubt as to whether it would be advisable for me, as the President of the Knights of Zion, to sponsor the candidacy of Mr. Mack. I took the matter up with some of our officials and leading members, and we had a long discussion about it. After considering the question from all angles, however, and satisfying ourselves as to his qualifications for the office, we decided to give him our full support. Brother Harris remarked that if we helped him to become a judge, we should be able to call upon him to help us in the cause of Zionism; and that, in any event, it would reflect credit upon the Jews of Chicago to have such an able man on the bench.

We conducted a strong campaign among organizations and congregations. I spoke at several meetings in his behalf, as did Harris. I went one Saturday, with Mr. Mack, to the largest synagogue on the West Side, known as the Anshe Kanesses Israel, where I appealed to the congregation to support his candidacy. Mr. Mack also made a very forceful speech on that occasion.

He was successful in the campaign, and up to this day, I am proud that I did my share in helping him win the election. He is now a Judge of the Federal Court, and in his entire career on the bench, Judge Mack has been considered one of our best jurists.

In addition, Harris' prophecy was more than realized, for Judge Mack eventually joined the Zionist movement and is now one of its important leaders. He is recognized as one of the prominent Jews of this country.

Zionism acquired an influential supporter in the person of Justice Louis D. Brandeis, who became interested in the movement prior to his elevation to the Supreme Court bench. At one time it devolved upon Mr. Max Shulman and myself to escort him from his hotel to a local Zionist meeting. While riding to the place of meeting in a carriage, we talked about Zionism in general. Mr. Brandeis asked us for our opinions as to how the movement was progressing.

"Tell me something," he said, "good, bad or indifferent."

I pointed out that Zionism did not have one central organization, but too many separate little branches; that we had to make too many excuses and explanations to every little group as to how it was connected with the Zionist movement and how the funds raised were being distributed, and mentioned other flaws due to lack of centralization. I was flattered when he readily agreed with me.

Mr. Samuel Ginsberg is another who has done his share in the growth of Zionism. He is known to be one of the most sincere, faithful and reliable workers for the cause, and can be credited with helping to bring the movement to its present standing.

Mr. Hyman Steinberg is often described as the "brains" of the National Fund, a branch of the Zionist Organization, which has as its object the raising of funds to buy land in Palestine. He is known to have given more to this cause than he could well afford. A very enthusiastic and forceful speaker, Mr. Steinberg has never failed to emphasize the importance of the National Fund at any gathering he has addressed, and has achieved splendid results.

Mr. John Rissman is also one of the well known workers for Zionism and other good causes. He is quite a liberal contributor to the Zionist Organization of Chicago, of which he has been Treasurer for many years.

Judge J. M. Braude joined the Zionist movement about ten years ago. He served as President of the local group for several years and is now chairman of the National Fund Committee. Under his administration as President of the Chicago Zionist Organization, two big affairs were given here which attracted nationwide attention. One, known as "The Purim Festival," was given at the Chicago Stadium before an audience of about 25,000.

The second was a tremendous undertaking called, "The Romance of a People." It was given at Soldier's Field, and over 125,000 people attended. Judge Fisher was chairman of the affair. Both pageants were initiated by Mr. Meyer Weisgall of New York.

Judge Braude is considered one of the ablest judges on the bench, and is admired for his knowledge of the law, for his sincerity and for his fair judgment.

Mr. Harry Lipsky, general manager of the Daily Jewish Courier, and a man of high intellect, has rendered considerable and valuable service to the Zionist movement. Among other things, he was chiefly responsible for having one of the finest schools in Chicago named after Theodore Herzl, thus perpetuating the memory of that great leader in this city.

James Loebner and M. Indritz, well known writers in the Jewish field, were connected with the Jewish Daily Courier for a number of years while Zionism was in process of development. They deserve a great deal of credit for having used their talented pens to further the cause.

The present editor of the Courier, Dr. Mordecai Katz, has devoted, and still devotes, his splendid literary abilities to aid Zionism.

Our popular Orthodox Rabbi, Benjamin A. Daskal, has not permitted his many rabbinical duties to interfere with his interest in Palestine. He has responded to every call made upon him.

It is not possible to mention here all the men and women who have given of their time and energy to Zionism and other community endeavors, but there are some names that come to my mind repeatedly. These are I. T. Feingold, Mr. Ribback, B. J. Schiff, Morris Augustus, J. Miller, Capt. H. Waiss, Dr. Robert L. Halperin, B. L. Sloan, Mr. Meyer Abrams, a well known Chicago lawyer, and Mr. Bernard Shulman, who is now taking the place of his departed brother, Max Shulman; also Rabbis Morris Teller, A. E. Abramowitz, Samuel M. Blumenfield, David Graubart, B. H. Birnbaum, Charles Schulman and Felix Mendelsohn. There are other names that ought to be mentioned here, among the early Zionists, but my memory does not serve me as well as I should like, and so I hope an oversight will not be judged too harshly.

It is of interest to note that practically all the men I have named here came to Chicago as poor immigrants, without friends or money, and unfamiliar with the language. Yet each managed, through hard and honest work, to become a good citizen, benefiting the city as a whole and the Jewish community as well.

A few years ago, the older Zionists realized that younger blood was desirable in the movement. This suggestion was particularly advanced by Rabbi Solomon Goldman. It was consequently decided that the old administration, under Mr. Max Shulman, should delegate their main activities to younger men. Mr. William Katz, a well-known business man, was elected president, and with Col. A. H. Rosenberg, a prominent financier and very able organizer, Dr. A. K. Epstein, a well-known chemist, and several others, took over the leadership in 1935, under the direction of Rabbi Goldman.

Mr. Katz is serving his third term as president of the Chicago Zionist Organization. He has proved to be a hard and earnest worker, well fitted for his task.

Dr. Epstein, a man of high intellect and ideals, devotes a great deal of his time and money to the cause of Zionism. He is of the old-time "Russian intelligentsia," of which a fellow-chemist, Dr. Wolf Kritchewski, is another fine example.

Colonel Rosenberg has proved himself, in connection with his work in Zionism, a man of unusual energy, earnest and conscientious, and possessed of good common sense. He contributes most liberally to the cause.

At the time these men came into office, the Zionist movement had been under way for about forty years, and had spread to every part of the world. A great deal was expected from the new administration — but many unforeseen developments have since occurred, and considering these factors the new leadership has functioned to the best of its ability.

In 1938, because of his zeal and particular qualifications, Rabbi Goldman was elected president of the Zionist Organization of America.

The Zionists of Chicago can be proud of having contributed more than their share to the development of Palestine, the people I have mentioned being largely responsible for what has been accomplished. We have raised many millions of dollars, having given as much as $200,000.00 in a single year. We have helped large numbers of homeless refugees to settle in Palestine and start life over again.

At present Palestine contains about 450,000 Jews, the all-Jewish city, Tel Aviv, containing more than 150,000 Jews. Some 125,000 are living in 200 settlements on the land. It is indeed a splendid piece of work that has been done there — and a privilege to have shared in that task.

In the front rank of those who labored for Zionism were Chicago women of outstanding ability.

"Hadassah," the women's branch of the Zionist organization, has grown to great strength. National in scope, it is composed of girls and women in all walks of life. Its chief purpose has been the maintaining of hospitals in Palestine, giving medical aid to both Jews and non-Jews, in that country. An extremely active and ambitious group, the women of "Hadassah" raise hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to carry on their splendid task. In the last few years, they have done wonderful work in connection with the "Youth Aliyah," which movement has concerned itself with taking Jewish children out of Germany and resettling them in Palestine.

Among the women most active in "Hadassah" and Zionism in Chicago are the following: Mrs. Benjamin Davis, Esther Weinshenker Natkin, Hannah Shulman Sager, Pearl Franklin, Bertha Read Rissman, Jennie Perlstein, Mrs. Belle Friedlander, Mrs. Bertha Berkman, Mrs. Goldie Stone, Mrs. Harry M. Fisher and Mrs. S. H. Soboroff. Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Stone have always worked closely together. They have not confined their interest to Zionism but have been active in every project looking to the welfare of the Jewish community.

All of these women have a fine understanding of the history and ideals of Zionism and each of them has a long record of unselfish service and unswerving devotion in that cause so vital to the spirit of Israel.

CHAPTER IX

WAR RELIEF

About a year after the outbreak of the World War, we received information concerning the suffering of the people in Poland and Russia, especially among the Jews of those countries. My brother, Harris, insisted that something must be done to help these poor people.

I thereupon took up the matter with a few of our Zionist leaders, and we at once decided to organize a movement to raise money for this purpose. I consulted with Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, and asked him to prevail upon Mr. Julius Rosenwald to lend his assistance to the undertaking, and he complied with my request. It was suggested to him, however, by Mr. Rosenwald that it was not proper for us to raise money for Jews only, but that we should raise money for all people. With this Dr. Hirsch did not agree, reasoning that the Jews were the greatest sufferers, and the first victims whenever the Russians entered enemy country. Jews, he said, were fighting on the battlefields of every nation, and were thus actually compelled to fight against each other. He felt we should come to the aid of the Jews first, and then, if a general movement was started, we should all participate and contribute as much as we could thereto.

I called another meeting, and we worked out a program. At our first mass meeting, Dr. Hirsch was one of the principal speakers, and we raised several thousand dollars. Soon afterward, similar organizations were formed in various cities throughout the United States, and a great deal of money was raised during the war for the sufferers in Europe.

Among the calls for assistance was an urgent appeal from Palestine. Several cables were received informing us that due to war conditions, there was a great scarcity of food, and the Jews in Palestine were on the verge of starvation. We were urged to send food at once.

A group of us Zionists immediately organized a committee for the purpose of securing contributions of food. As chairman of the meeting, I suggested the slogan, "Bread for Palestine," which was unanimously accepted. Within a comparatively short time, we managed to obtain donations of several carloads of flour, cereal and other groceries, and shipped them to Palestine. We continued this work for quite a while, until the situation changed for the better.

In the meantime, the leading Jews of New York had organized the Jewish Relief Joint Distribution Committee. This had three branches, one being known as the American Jewish Relief Committee, the other as the Central Relief Committee, and the third as the Peoples Relief Committee. I was a member of the Chicago group, which joined as a branch of the Central Relief Committee.

The above-mentioned relief organizations prevailed upon President Wilson to designate a certain day to be devoted to raising funds to buy food for Jewish war sufferers, and the President accordingly designated January 17, 1916, as "Jewish Day." On that day, meetings were held throughout the country. As chairman of the Central Relief Committee of Chicago, I arranged that meetings be held by all local synagogues and Jewish organizations.

I was called upon to preside at a meeting that evening at the Anshe Kanesses Israel. In my opening remarks, I drew a comparison between an experience of my youth and the current situation. I recalled the custom of providing "eating days" for poor Talmudic students.

"When, as a lad of thirteen," I related, "I was a student of the Talmud in Wilno, I remember how the beadle of the synagogue took me by the hand and appealed to the generosity of the congregation to provide me with an 'eating day.'

"Now this day," I continued, "has been set aside by the President of the United States as an 'eating day,' not for a single individual, but for all the hungry Jews of Europe."

A visiting speaker from New York liked my analogy so well that he later reported it to the Executive Committee in that city.

When I concluded my appeal, Judge Hugo Pam rose to address the congregation. Remarking that he had no money with him, he took out his watch, which was a very valuable one, and handed it to the secretary, as his contribution for the cause. Others followed his example, and we collected a large amount of jewelry, which was later auctioned back to the owners. In addition, we raised at the synagogue that evening over $10,000.00 in cash contributions. The total raised throughout the country on that day amounted to several million dollars.

Since the above-named organizations were formed, they have raised and distributed about a hundred and twenty-five million dollars for the relief of European Jewry.

* * *

Soon after the war ended, I was called upon to act as one of three commissioners delegated to go to Poland to distribute food and money to the needy. I received a telephone call from New York, and then a letter, instructing me to be ready on a certain date, if I accepted, and was informed that a shipload of food would be en route to Poland, so that when we arrived we could at once proceed to distribute the food and organize relief stations wherever necessary. The letter contained specific instructions. We were supposed to sail within three weeks from the date mentioned, going first to Copenhagen, Denmark. Our passports and letters of credit, we were informed, would be ready for us, so that we would not have to waste time in New York.

Dr. Boris Bogan, who was a professional community worker and a graduate of a school of social service, left about two weeks ahead of the rest of us, to arrange for an office and living quarters.

He was to act as the general secretary for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the three branch organizations.

My fellow members of the commission were Mr. Isadore Hershfield, an attorney, representing the American Jewish Relief Committee, which consisted chiefly of well-to-do Jews of the country; and Mr. Baruch Zuckerman, who represented the People's Relief Committee, composed mainly of representatives of the laboring class. I represented the Central Relief Committee, composed chiefly of middle class Orthodox Jews.

It was shortly after the Armistice was declared that all these arrangements were made. Conditions in Europe were still very chaotic. Communication and travel, both by rail and water, were uncertain and difficult. My relatives and friends urged me not to go on this mission, because of the many dangers involved; but my mind was made up, and I made the necessary preparations for the journey.

About twelve days before I was to leave Chicago, I was suddenly informed that I would have to obtain my passport myself. I at once put in a long distance call to Mr. Lucas, who was in charge of the New York office, and kept him on the telephone for ten minutes, in an effort to learn the reason for this, since their letter had definitely stated that they would make all such arrangements, and that my passport would be ready for me on my arrival in New York. Mr. Lucas, however, answered me evasively, and simply repeated: "You will have to get your passport yourself, or you cannot go."

I was greatly disturbed by this unexpected development. The Jewish press, and many other papers, had already announced that I was to serve on the Relief Commission, under the Hoover Food Administration, and I had gone to a great deal of trouble to prepare myself for the journey.

I immediately started negotiations with the proper authorities in Chicago and New York. Shortly afterward, I was called in by Federal officials for questioning. They amazed me by telling me point-blank that I was listed in the government records as having been disloyal in my expressed attitude toward the war, and asked for an explanation. I requested that they give me the particulars of any complaints that had been lodged against me, but they refused to give me any details, and stated only that their granting of the passport would depend on what explanation I could offer. I thereupon stated my case, as follows:

"When our government declared war," I said, "and the citizens were called upon to obey all its orders, I, as a citizen of the United States, did obey all the laws, orders and regulations issued in connection therewith. I bought all the Liberty bonds that I could, and advised many young men to enlist and not wait to be drafted. I have three nephews, who enlisted on my advice. As to what I have in my own mind, concerning whether it was proper to enter the war, that, I believe, is my own affair. As an American citizen for the last thirty-eight years, I have always understood that I was entitled to my own opinion so long as it did not interfere with the laws of the country.

"Regarding my loyalty and good citizenship," I added, "let me give you a brief summary of my activities since I came here. When I came to this country, I brought with me about a hundred and fifty dollars, which was a great deal more than was brought by any other immigrant I know of. I worked for every cent I earned here, and did my share in helping to build the country. Starting out as a common laborer, I afterward became a manufacturer and erected factory buildings. I now employ many people, and at the same time am interested in community affairs, doing all I can for those who are in need. For the past five years I have been serving on the Board of Election Commissioners of Chicago.

"Now I have been called upon to go to war-stricken Europe on a mission of mercy, to help feed and clothe the wives, children and relatives of men here in America, who are American citizens, and to aid other victims of the war. I have accepted the call and am ready to go, though I do so at a great sacrifice to my business, and perhaps to my health. I can furnish you with letters from prominent Chicagoans, some of whom are known throughout the United States, which will tell you whether or not I am entitled to a passport."

My little speech seemed to make the desired impression upon the three men who were questioning me.

"We will take this up with the passport authorities in Washington at once," said one of them; and another added: "If you want to go, you had better be ready. The chances are that you will get your passport."

Before leaving Chicago, I wrote to Miss Bella Jay (now Mrs. Friedlander), who was then in Washington, in the employ of the government. She had been secretary of the relief office in Chicago during the time I was chairman of the organization. I asked her to secure the passport for me, and send it to New York, in care of the Astor Hotel. There I received it the day after I arrived in New York.

Although I now had my passport, as well as letters of recommendation from several of the most prominent men in Chicago, I was anxious to find out just what the government had against me, and requested one of my trusted friends to do everything he could to discover the nature of the charges during my absence.

Six months later, when I returned from Europe, I was informed that the records in Washington showed, under the letter "H," the names of two men who had not been one hundred per cent loyal in their attitude toward the war. One of the names was that of Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, and next to his name, was mine. On being told of this, I felt no shame at all. In fact, I often remarked about it to my friends, asserting that if there was any blemish on my name, it was worth it, if it placed me in the same category with a man like Dr. Hirsch, one of the most prominent orators, scholars and thinkers in the United States.

The specific charges, I discovered, were these: During the period of the war, President M. Salk and Rabbi Ephraim Epstein had requested me to speak one Friday evening in their synagogue, Anshe Kanesses Israel, on which occasion Judge Harry M. Fisher was also to speak.

I accepted the invitation with the understanding that I would be allowed to choose my own subject. In the course of my talk, I severely criticized the officers and directors of the congregation for inviting or permitting men to deliver speeches concerned with war propaganda, especially during the services. A week before, I had attended holiday services in that synagogue, during which I listened to a speech by a prominent lawyer, Levy Mayer, who is now deceased. Mr. Mayer had a national reputation as a lawyer and a man of great influence.

"Here you are free citizens," he told the congregation. "You can worship the way you want to; you are free to send your children to school, and are free to engage in any business you wish to. In short, you are American citizens, with the same rights as any other American. Now, since this country is at war, you should support the war with heart, soul and mind. If not, you may suffer the same pogroms, oppression and persecution that you did in Russia!"

In my talk before the congregation, I stated that Mr. Mayer had been right and had performed his duty when he told the people to be loyal to the United States in every way and all the time, especially in wartime.

"However," I added, "war means killing and maiming, shedding human blood and visiting unspeakable agony upon human beings. Therefore, a synagogue, which is a house of worship, is not the proper place for advocating the killing and maiming of human beings and preaching inhumanity. When we pray to God, whom we claim to be the Father of all mankind, and ask His forgiveness and that He be merciful toward everyone, no matter who or where he may be, we should not at the same time think of murdering and shedding the blood of hundreds of thousands of human beings.

"Here in this holy place, we should pray to God that the war be ended soon, and by some kind of compromise. Our President Wilson has often used the expression, 'Peace without victory.' Of all the phrases he has coined, I like this one the best. May the war be ended with a peace without malice or revenge.

"Certainly this is not the place to preach hatred against our German neighbors, because their government is at war with our government. They are Americans, like ourselves. They live near us, and have been our friends. Why should we preach hatred against friends and good neighbors?

"We are doing our duty in obeying the orders of the government, in buying war bonds, paying our taxes and sending our sons and relatives thousands of miles away, possibly to be maimed or killed. What more can we do?"

My greatest objection was to Mr. Mayer's statement about pogroms and persecutions. I showed how inconsistent he was.

"First," I said, "he tells us that we have equal rights and are just as good as any other American, and in the next breath he says that we may suffer pogroms. If we are free citizens, we are entitled to every privilege and protection enjoyed by all other American citizens. If that is so, why should he suggest that they may make pogroms against us?"

Someone in the congregation (I afterwards learned who it was) reported what I had said to the authorities here, and it was for that reason that my name had been placed on the list, as being disloyal to the government in my attitude toward the war.

After completing arrangements in New York pertaining to finances, passports and other details, Mr. Hershfield and I departed for Copenhagen. We sailed on a very small steamer, and the voyage took nearly four weeks. We found the trip quite thrilling and dangerous, as it was necessary for the ship to traverse long stretches of ocean that contained nests of mines which had been planted by the warring countries. Though a great many of the mines had been removed, quite a number still remained; some of them had broken away and could be seen floating about.

There were several hundred passengers on the boat. For some time, none of us were aware of the situation. We only knew that we were sailing along very slowly, and at times would even stop for hours. Frequently we were at a complete standstill all night. When the passengers became restless, and began complaining, the captain, who was a Dane and spoke English rather quaintly, explained the matter in a humorous way.

"If it takes me a whole lot longer than it should," he said, "to take you to your destination, then the only thing you can say about me is that I'm a slow captain; but if I should run into a mine and drown you all, your families and the whole world will not say that I'm a slow captain, but a murderous captain. Therefore, I choose to be a slow captain."

We arrived safely in Copenhagen, where we found Mr. Zuckerman, who had preceded us. We settled down to wait for the food boat.

A week after our arrival, we were invited to a reception to be given in our honor by the Rabbi and prominent Jewish citizens of Copenhagen. On that occasion, we were naturally called upon to speak. Mr. Hershfield, who spoke first, explained about the work his committee was doing and intended to do for the war sufferers, and made a very good impression upon his audience.

Mr. Zuckerman then spoke, telling about the poor working people, and how they suffered both in war and in peace. Though a very forceful, convincing and fiery speaker, I noticed that his talk had a depressing effect upon his hearers, and I therefore decided, when my turn came, to speak in a lighter vein.

I began by stating that only twice in my life had I heard about Denmark — the first time was when I read Shakespeare's play, "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark," and the second time was when we were informed, in New York, that our destination would be Denmark. Although this comment might have been taken as an insult, the audience seemed to enjoy it, and laughed graciously. I went on to describe what I had observed during the twelve days of my visit.

"You should be proud of your city," I told them. "It is like London, in almost every respect, although it isn't so large or so noisy. But the weather is the same, as it rains from morning to night. The only difference is that in London, the people carry umbrellas or wear raincoats, while here they go out in the rain without either, and don't even get wet. God must have taken care of you good Copenhagen people, when you can go out in the rain without umbrellas and not get wet."

I congratulated them upon the appearance and courteous behavior of the police officials, and of the people in general, and concluded with a joke about London. After a certain man had been there for two weeks, during which time it rained steadily, he asked the hotelkeeper whether it rained in London all the year 'round. "Well," the latter replied, "it doesn't rain all the time — sometimes it snows."

As we had as yet received no word concerning our food ship, which was known as "Westward Ho," we took the matter up with the American authorities. We were informed that the ship was en route to Poland, where it was due to arrive within a few days. As we prepared to leave for Poland, we were advised to provide ourselves with sufficient food for the trip, as we would have to pass through Germany, where food could not be secured at any price.

When we arrived in Warsaw, a few days later, we found Dr. Boris Bogan, the general secretary of all the Committees, waiting for us.

Dr. Bogan, who has since passed away, was a person of high intelligence. He was well read, spoke Russian, Yiddish and some Polish, and was quite a statesman. However, after working with him for a week, I found that he possessed a fault common to most men who like himself were professional social workers. He wanted to handle everything, from beginning to end, and did not want any of his associates to initiate anything, or make any plans or advise him what to do. This naturally gave rise to misunderstandings between us from the start.

As to the characteristics of Mr. Zuckerman, I found him to be very conscientious and very able, and a forceful, interesting and convincing speaker. However, he possessed a fault in that everything he said or did was colored by his uncompromising and almost fanatical attitude toward the labor question. He was concerned first, last and always with the working man, and could see in only one direction, no matter what was involved.

Mr. Hershfield, who is a man of good common sense and also speaks well, I found to be a very easy-going individual. In the course of our activities, he never insisted on anything, nor would he try to initiate any plans. He just went along, carefully avoiding controversies.

It is only fair, I suppose, that I should also mention here my own faults, and I shall try to give a true picture by imagining that I am talking about someone else.

Outside of a few years at "cheder" (Hebrew school), I have had no schooling, since from the time I left "cheder," at the age of thirteen, I had the responsibility of earning a livelihood. I worked hard and had very little time to spend in reading or study. Thus, whatever knowledge I have acquired, has been grasped here and there, wherever I could get it. Whenever I find myself among people who are superior intellectually, whether I know them or not, I suffer from a feeling of inferiority. By nature, I am very nervous. Though I have always tried to control this, I have forgotten myself at times and let my nerves get the best of me. In these cases, I have to make a great effort to "calm down," and this explains my sometimes displaying a harsh temper. In spite of these drawbacks, however, when I have time to think things over, I generally know what I want, and can distinguish between common sense and mere foolishness.

From the above descriptions, it is obvious that we four men did not make the best possible team. However, Dr. Bogan, in his report afterwards to the Joint Distribution Committee, to whom we were answerable, gave me a good deal of credit for my work on the commission. I later had the further satisfaction of hearing Mr. Felix Warburg, president of the Joint Distribution Committee, state at a meeting that I had been most fit for the work, and he added that if my advice had been followed, much of the trouble we encountered could have been avoided, and many lives have been saved.

Our first misunderstanding occurred two days after our arrival in Warsaw, when we four met to map out our program. Dr. Bogan, who presided, asked what we thought should be done first. My two colleagues wanted an expression from him, but he said he wanted to hear my opinion before stating his. I told him that it seemed to me our first duty was to see Prime Minister Ignaz Paderewski, then the recognized head of the Polish government, since we had come on a mission which concerned Polish citizens, both Jews and non-Jews. I believed that we should report first to Premier Paderewski, extending to him the courtesy he deserved, after which our next step would be to make arrangements for the proper division of the shipload of food between the Jews and the non-Jews.

Mr. Zuckerman objected strenuously to my suggestions. He stated that his conscience and his policy, from the proletarian point of view, would not permit him to visit a representative of the bourgeois class and the so-called nobility. A heated argument ensued between Mr. Zuckerman and myself, as Dr. Bogan and Mr. Hershfield did not take part in the discussion. I tried to impress upon Mr. Zuckerman the fact that we were in a strange land, with a newly formed government, and that for our own protection, it was essential that we make ourselves and our mission known to them. Besides, we were semi-official representatives of the Hoover Food Administration of the United States, and it was therefore our duty to show courtesy to the head of the Polish government.

All these arguments were of no avail. It was then I realized what a strong force Mr. Zuckerman was to deal with. Shouting at the top of his voice and emphasizing his remarks by hammering his fist heavily on the table, he insisted that if we decided to go and see the Prime Minister, he would leave the Committee and have nothing to do with us. Influenced by his excited arguments, the other two men agreed to follow Mr. Zuckerman's advice, and make no official report to the government.

Three days later, we each received a letter from His Excellency, Ignaz Paderewski, asking that we meet with him on a certain day, at a specified place, to discuss methods and plans for disposing of our shipload of food, which had by this time arrived. My colleagues felt that this was as it should be — that Mr. Zuckerman was right. We had not had to go to the government, but had made the government come to us. I, however, still felt our procedure had been wrong.

When we assembled at the appointed time, there were present, besides the Prime Minister, several officials of the Polish government, and Rabbi Perlmutter, a well known Orthodox Rabbi whom

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"BREAD FOR PALESTINE" COMMITTEE
Author Supervising Shipment of Foodstuffs.

the Prime Minister had invited. The latter's remarks, upon opening the conference, made us all blush.

"You found it important enough," said Paderewski, "to make statements to the press, and to see a good many private people about your being here; but you did not think it was proper to report to the officials of the government of Poland as to your arrival and the mission you have to perform." My three companions looked very abashed, and I was the only one who could hold up my head.

In discussing the unloading and division of the food, it was suggested that a committee be appointed to handle the matter. I proposed, however, that since the cargo had been under the jurisdiction of the Polish government from the start, and since we could not obtain it without their authority, we should only be considered as consignees of that portion intended for distribution among the Jewish population; that we accordingly secure permission to remove our portion, leaving the rest in the hands of the Polish government. The Polish officials still felt it would be best that a joint committee be appointed, and my colleagues agreed with them. Further discussion ensued, and it was decided the matter be held in abeyance.

That afternoon, when we four met alone, I was reproached for the stand I had taken. The others felt I had been impolite and undiplomatic and had acted as though I did not trust the Polish government with our part of the cargo. Even Mr. Zuckerman, who had opposed our going to see the Prime Minister, thought that I had been unwise and even impertinent, in making the proposition I did. Though I felt hurt by their manner, I remained outwardly calm.

A few days later I informed Dr. Bogan that I would like to take full charge of the immediate unloading of our part of the cargo. To my great surprise, he agreed to let me handle the matter.

I at once engaged a man who was recommended to me as being reliable and intelligent, and who knew how to deal with the government officials. Although I had a statement showing what food belonged to us, it took me six days of trotting around from one office to another, using all the influence I could, before we finally received permission to start unloading our portion. When this was accomplished, we rented a warehouse, engaged wagons and trucks, and in a comparatively short time had all our allotted foodstuff under our own jurisdiction. This food consisted of flour, condensed milk, vegetable oil and cheese.

About six weeks later the Polish government issued a claim against us for nearly $200,000.00, asserting that food to that amount had been stolen from the boat before we unloaded our allotment. Fortunately we had official documents proving that we had withdrawn only what belonged to us, and though we had numerous arguments and discussions with officials of the government, we ended up without paying them anything.

The difficult question of distribution now arose. In that respect, we considered Dr. Bogan an authority, and decided to leave that phase of our activities in his hands. His plan was that we first publish in all the local papers the fact that we had food to distribute among all in dire need thereof, and requesting that these people come to our office and register their names and addresses, and other necessary information. Upon the completion of these registrations, we were to investigate as to which were worthy cases. We would then set up stations in various parts of the city, and all those having proof that they were entitled to the food, would receive supplies according to their needs.

These elaborate arrangements did not appeal to me, as it was obvious that it would be a tremendous undertaking to register and investigate over a hundred thousand people. During the time it would take to do all this, hundreds might perish for lack of food. However, Dr. Bogan assured me that he knew what he was doing, and that he could handle this part of our work better than I. Since I had no better plan to offer at the moment, I said nothing.

Our office was instructed to call in the newspaper men and make announcement of our procedure. I learned, at this time, that there were about three hundred and fifty thousand Jews in Warsaw. Before the war, there had been an organization to take care of the sick and the needy, and making inquiries on my own initiative, I discovered that this organization was still in existence.

My daily contacts with the representative Jews of Poland showed them to be understanding and highly intelligent. Almost all of them spoke a fine German, as well as Polish and Yiddish, and most of them were well read and well versed as to world conditions. From my observations, it appeared that the better-situated class of people were serious and reliable, although it must be said that the poorer people, those to whom procuring bread and milk was the problem of the day, could not be believed in every instance.

My colleagues did not quite agree with my findings. Mr. Zuckerman felt that the only people we should deal with were the representatives of union labor while Dr. Bogan was of the opinion that one could not rely too greatly on the word of any of the Polish Jews.

However, I took it upon myself to go to see the president of the relief organization of which I had learned. He was a prominent banker of the city. He told me he was glad that I had come to him, since he had already seen Dr. Bogan, who had stated he would have nothing to do with that group.

He informed me that their organization had seven branches in Warsaw; that they had the names of all those who needed help, and could be of real service to us. The organization comprised leading citizens of the town, and the officers and directors were responsible and reliable. However, when I suggested to Dr. Bogan that we use their facilities, he would not consent.

"You don't know the people here as well as I do," he said. "Anything that is to be done must be done by ourselves, and not through them."

And so the registration took place, as planned. We had to rent a large office for the purpose, and employ a good many people. Everybody was kept busy with the registration, looking for desirable places in various parts of the city, setting up stations, and distributing the food.

After the distribution began, I took a tour around the stations, and when I saw what the people were receiving, I was convinced the matter was not being handled properly.

At the first branch I visited, I met a woman coming out with two pounds of flour, a few cans of condensed milk and some vegetable oil. I asked her opinion about it, and she said:

"If they would give me a whole sack of flour, I could have it for a few weeks; I could bake bread and could use it for soup with the milk. I could make cake and use a little of the oil for it. But what can I do with two pounds of flour, except to make a little soup with it?"

I learned also that the flour that was handed out was wrapped in loose pieces of paper, so that by the time the people brought it home, most of it was lost. Many of the people, I discovered, would take their ration of flour into a bakery shop and trade it for a loaf or half a loaf of bread. This, of course, we could not control. All in all, considering the expense involved in parcelling out rations in such small amounts, the undertaking, at the beginning, did not prove successful. Gradually, however, the various difficulties were overcome, and the distribution then proceeded smoothly.

While this work was going on, we decided, at one of our meetings, that all of us need not stay in Warsaw, and that our activities should be divided among various sections of Poland. Mr. Hershfield was delegated to take a large sum of money and distribute it in the small communities of one district, while Mr. Zuckerman was to go in another direction, distributing foodstuff. Dr. Bogan arranged to visit the larger cities in Poland and Lithuania. It devolved upon me to remain in Warsaw and supervise the distribution of our food there. Since it was now close to Passover, I was also to make arrangements for the baking of matzos for those listed in our registry.

Poland was at that time having border difficulties with Russia, which had just come under the control of the "Bolsheviks." I accordingly advised my colleagues to see the authorities in Warsaw before starting out, so that they might know what places to avoid. I also suggested that they secure civil and military credentials, to be on the safe side, especially in the case of Mr. Hershfield, who was to carry large sums of money.

On this matter, we also disagreed. Mr. Zuckerman argued that these precautions were unnecessary, since we were American citizens and had passports and therefore no one had any right to interfere with us. He went on to say that, as a representative of the working class, he would not humiliate himself by going to the bourgeois government to ask for favors.

"How will you get along without knowing the language," I asked, "and what will you do if the official is unable to read your English passport?"

"Let him go and learn the language," he replied, "so that he can speak to me instead of me speaking to him."

My suggestions were all overruled, and they left for their respective territories. At that time, the decisions and activities of the Committee were published in both the Jewish and Polish press.

I now turned to my assigned tasks and began to make inquiries about matzo baking, of which I knew very little. As a lad of ten or twelve, I had played near the shop of my uncle, Chaim Eleazer, who was a matzo baker, and all I knew was what I had gathered from watching him.

To aid me with this difficult problem, I went to see a well known Jew of Warsaw, Mr. Levin Epstein, whose brother, Mr. E. W. Levin Epstein, I knew in America. The latter was known throughout the Zionist world as the founder of Rishon L'Zion, one of the very oldest colonies in Palestine. He also was the man who had established branches all over the world for the sale of carmel wine, produced in Palestine, in which venture Baron Rothschild was interested, having invested the necessary funds.

Mr. Levin Epstein arranged for me to see him at his home. On my arrival, at the appointed time, I found several prominent men, among them two Rabbis. These men explained to me the difficulties I would encounter in trying to bake matzos for distribution. First of all, they said, the pious people would raise the question of whether the flour, having come from a foreign country, was kosher; that they would want to know whether the flour was produced for the purpose of making matzos. Secondly, they told me that there were enough matzo bakers in Warsaw to supply more than was needed for the Jewish population of the city. A third objection was that the minute we started, we would have strikes, instigated by the regular matzo bakers, and we would have trouble with the labor unions. Fourthly, they assured me that a great many families were receiving matzos from their relatives in other countries. The general conclusion was that it would be foolish for me to attempt such an undertaking. We talked the matter over for about three hours, although I realized from the beginning that they were right.

I decided then to confer with the president of the relief organization whom I had previously interviewed. Upon stating my problem, he assured me that he would place their list of needy families at my disposal.

"If you have confidence in what I tell you," he said, "and if you want to take my advice, this is what you ought to do. We will furnish you with an estimate of how much it will cost to supply all the poor with matzos. If you will then give us the money, we will use our seven branch offices to distribute the cash to the needy. With this they can buy meat, fish or shoes, or anything else, in case they are supplied with matzos through some other source."

I at once agreed to this plan, and he advised me that he would call a meeting of the directors of his organization and let me know their reaction.

When I returned to the office, I was surprised to find Mr. Zuckerman, back from his trip. He seemed disturbed and distressed.

"What is the matter, friend Zuckerman?" I asked.

"Nothing," he replied, and springing up, said, "Don't bother me."

I assumed he had had some difficulty with the officials, and asking no more, went about my business.

When I came out again into the street, I heard people talking excitedly, mentioning something about a great tragedy that had occurred in the town of Pinsk. I soon learned the details. Pinsk lies not far from the Russian frontier, where border fighting was in progress between Russia and Poland at that time. When Mr. Zuckerman arrived in that town, in the course of his trip, he neglected to report to the authorities to inform them of his mission, namely, that he had come to inquire, as representative of an American Relief Organization, how many people were in need of food and clothing, and that it would be necessary for him to call a meeting of some of the townspeople for that purpose. He merely notified the representatives of the working people that they should come to see him, to decide upon how much food should be sent in.

After meeting with these representatives, and discussing the matter with them, Mr. Zuckerman left. That evening, the men with whom he had conferred called a meeting of about forty of their union members. While this was in progress, someone reported to the Polish military authorities stationed in the town that a Jewish radical and sympathizer of Soviet Russia had been there, and had advised the local labor leaders to call a meeting to discuss rendering help to the Russian army, in their attacks on the Poles.

The clever and patriotic Polish official to whom this was reported succeeded in accomplishing a very heroic act. His men surrounded the place where the forty boys and girls were meeting to decide upon the distribution of the food, marched them all out to a field near the town, and executed them like dogs, without any question or consideration.

Upon hearing this story, I hurried back to the office and confronted Mr. Zuckerman.

"I want you to speak to me like a man," I said, "and forget about the bourgeois, and political questions. What happened there?"

He was obviously greatly distressed. "I am sorry that I didn't tell you about it before," he said. "All I know is that they were all killed."

This calamity, of course, created a scandal, and the Jewish and Polish papers carried headlines about it for several days. The Jewish papers called it a plain and simple massacre of innocent boys and girls; while the Polish papers insisted it was a proper penalty paid to a group of "Bolsheviks" who were conspiring against Poland. It was a very regrettable and unfortunate occurrence, which could have been avoided.

Proceeding with my own work, I secured from the secretary of the Jewish relief organization in Warsaw an estimate of how much would be needed to provide the poor with matzos, and other necessities. I gave him a check for the specified amount, with the understanding that if it did not prove sufficient, I would give him additional funds. On the other hand, if there was a surplus, it was to be returned to us.

When these arrangements were made, and I was again free, I decided to carry out my plan upon which I had determined a few weeks before; that is, to travel independently outside of Warsaw, without the knowledge of the other members of the committee, and see for myself what was going on, since it was so difficult for us to work in co-operation. I had already previously secured proper credentials from the authorities, and had taken with me a Jewish young man, a native of Warsaw, who was to accompany me, procuring for him a special passport.

We set out, and visited first several small towns situated three or four hours' ride from Warsaw. In some of these villages, we found that about two-thirds of the houses had been wrecked by bombardment during the war; that food was so scarce that in some places it could not be purchased at all, and if any was available, exorbitant prices had to be paid. Many of the people were living in rude shelters, practically exposed to the elements. Most of them were ill, because of insufficient nourishment and unsanitary conditions.

In one of the towns, called Ostrolenko, a soup kitchen had been established. Here the starving inhabitants were able to secure one plate of soup a day. I happened to pass the place as the plates were being handed out through a wicket. A long line waited in front. Noticing that the wicket was about to be closed, some of the women in the rear of the line cried out desperately:

"Please keep the door open, and do not close it while we are still waiting for our food!"

I was reminded, by this scene, of the traditional prayer chanted during the "Neilah" services on Yom Kippur, toward evening, when the congregation prays to God to keep the gate of heaven open and not to close it while their prayers are still ascending.

On my return home, I related this incident to Dr. Hirsch, and he was so taken with my apt comparison, that he repeated it in several of his speeches.

Afterward, when the Hitler regime caused thousands of German Jews to look to Palestine as their only refuge, I had occasion to use this same illustration at a Zionist gathering.

"As in the 'Neilah' prayer," I said, "these poor German refugees are praying that the gates of Palestine be kept open, as they are about to be closed, so that they may enter that sanctuary."

In that same village of Ostrolenko, I found a woman and four children living in part of an old barn. One of the children had been stricken with pneumonia and was dying. It turned out that they were Americans, who had left New York before the war to visit the "old country," and had been stranded during the war. The woman told me her name was Bertha Grossman. I gave them what help I could, and when I returned to New York, made inquiries as to the whereabouts of the husband and father. My daughter-in-law, Lee, accompanied me on this quest. We found that he had suffered a nervous breakdown as a result of anxiety over his wife and children, from whom he had not heard in many years, and was confined to an institution. His family was brought to America, and when he was made to realize that they were safe and sound, and they were brought to see him, he gradually recovered, and was soon returned to health.

Some time later I received a letter from Mrs. Grossman, saying that she would be very happy if I would come to see her and her family the next time I was in New York. I made it a point to do so on one of my trips to that city. When I arrived at the address she gave me, I sent word up that a Mr. Horwich wanted to see her. What was my embarrassment when she came out to greet me, and threw her arms around me, crying, "My saviour! My saviour!" oblivious to the crowd that gathered in the street about us.

* * *

I spent several days in Bialystok, a large city with a numerous Jewish population. One evening, while there, I went to visit the brother of a man I knew in Chicago, and hired a Jewish cabman to drive me back to the hotel. I did not know, and the man did not tell me, that because of the existing unstable conditions, there was a curfew law in effect, prohibiting riding in the streets after ten o'clock in the evening. While driving along, I suddenly heard shouting, and looking out I saw two uniformed men on each side of the cab, with revolvers in their hands. They were calling to the cabman to stop. I told him to do so, but he refused and went right on, until they caught up with him. They took hold of the horse and dragged the driver from his seat. One of the men put a revolver to his face, and asked his companion, "Shall I fire?"

I rapidly spoke to them in English, begging them not to shoot. They conferred for a moment in Polish, and I was able to understand part of what they said. It seems that the driver insisted that his passenger, an American, had instructed him not to stop, but to go on. They turned to me, and I told them, in German, that I had not been aware of the curfew law, apologized and gave them some cigarettes. They came along with us to the hotel, where they released me, but started to take the cabman with them. It was only through the intercession of the manager of the hotel, who was a responsible appearing woman, that they agreed to let him go. She persuaded them with the aid of some drinks and sandwiches.

When I first came to Bialystok, I went at once to police headquarters, showed them my passport and my papers, and told them my mission. I must say that they treated me in a most courteous manner, and even offered to send a man along with me, if necessary, assuring me of their help and co-operation.

A few days later, I received a visit from a committee of four Rabbis, regarding some trouble which had occurred in Wilno, one of the largest cities in what was then Lithuania. A violent dispute, it seems, was then in progress between Poland and Lithuania as to which country the city of Wilno belonged to, and because of this disturbed state of affairs, the Polish authorities had arrested about thirty-six of the most prominent Jews of Wilno. The arrests had been made at midnight, and some of the men were taken from their beds, brought to Bialystok and placed in jail. The Rabbis wanted to know if I could do anything to help them.

Our instructions, which we had from New York, were that we were to concern ourselves only with helping the poor and the hungry, and were not to interfere in any political matters. I therefore informed my visitors that since this was a political matter, I was not permitted to interfere, but assured them that I would, nevertheless, see if anything could be done.

I asked the Rabbis to give me the names of the imprisoned men, and taking this list with me, I went to see the same authorities to whom I had reported on my arrival in Bialystok. I asked them to allow me to talk to the prisoners, but this they politely refused to do. However, they promised to examine into the matter at once, and stated that if they found the men had been arrested without grounds, they would be released. I explained that the prisoners were all responsible business and professional men; that the arrest had been a bad mistake, since Poland could not afford to have the American papers play it up, and they, therefore, ought to take action at once. I especially stressed the importance of their seeing to it that the men were treated well and provided with proper food and clothing, as some of them had been taken from their homes half-dressed. The officials assured me that this would be done.

I then communicated with one of the representatives of the United States Government in Warsaw, whose name, if I remember correctly, was Lieutenant Foster, and urged him to intercede. The result of my endeavors was that the men were released two days later, and I received a letter of thanks from the committee of Rabbis who had sought my aid.

During this trip, I discovered that the majority of the distressed people had friends or relatives in America, from whom help would be forthcoming if they could communicate with them. Communication, at that time, between Poland and other eastern European countries and the United States was most difficult and unreliable. It took even cables five or six days to be delivered, and in many instances they were not delivered at all.

After considering the problem from all angles, I decided to insert a notice in the local Jewish papers, advising that all those who had relatives or friends in the United States, who might help them, should publish the names and addresses of the latter in either of two Jewish papers in Warsaw, which I specified. I stated that I would remain in Bialystok for two days, for the purpose of receiving the names and addresses of those desiring help and the names and addresses of those they wished to contact, in America, and would try to prevail upon the American Government to assist in delivering letters and notifying relatives.

During those two days, hundreds of people came to me, with their stories, and their addresses. Among them was a man who told me that he had a daughter in America, who was a singer. He did not know by what name she was known there, but stated that her first name was "Raisel." I realized at once that he was referring to Rosa Raisa. When I told him how famous she was, he was the proudest and happiest man I met during all my travels. I went to visit him at his home, where I saw pictures of his daughter, and left him some money. Through the Jewish press in Chicago, Rosa Raisa was notified, and she immediately arranged to send her father a considerable sum of money, later bringing her family over to New York.

About a week later, when I returned to Warsaw, I found that Dr. Bogan and the others had also returned from their respective trips. Upon telling Dr. Bogan how I had handled the "matzo" situation, he almost went wild and criticized me severely. He contended that the money I gave to the organization would be lost; that no matter how much money they might have left over, I would never receive a cent back. It turned out he was wrong. We found that all the people entitled thereto had received money and were well satisfied; and after all expenses of distribution were deducted, I received a check for a substantial amount that was left over.

* * *

During my stay in Poland, I observed that there was a good deal of friction between the Poles and the Jews. One of the reasons for this, it seemed to me, was the continuous preaching about democracy and self-determination of the people and about minority rights, a great deal of which was misunderstood and mis-used. The newspapers especially took advantage of their opportunity to express themselves freely, and on the slightest provocation, the Polish and Yiddish newspapers carried screaming headlines, denouncing each other. When Germany occupied Poland, during the war, she showed preference to the Jews, largely because they were able to speak or understand German. Most of the political offices created by the occupation were given to Jews. This caused a great deal of jealousy and unfriendliness towards the Jews on the part of the Poles.

Soon after the war, when the Germans left and Poland became an independent country with its own government, the Jews lost their prestige, and the new Polish bureaucracy assumed an unfriendly attitude toward them.

A few weeks before I left Warsaw, I had occasion to attend a meeting of Jewish newspapermen, and expressed my opinion as to how they might avoid some of these difficulties. I suggested that they stop magnifying and exaggerating small wrongs, and write strong articles advising the Jews, especially Jewish representatives of labor unions, that they should acknowledge the fact that they now had a Polish government, and do their utmost to create harmony and friendship between them, instead of fostering enmity and encouraging friction.

I was especially outspoken, on this occasion, against the leaders of labor unions and the radical element, and mentioned in this connection the attitude of my friend, Mr. Zuckerman. I related how when he saw me stop to talk or give money to some poor, hungry person, Jew or non-Jew, he would quarrel with me and upbraid me, illustrating my point with a specific case. I related how one morning Mr. Zuckerman and I encountered a wretched, starved-looking woman, with a child in her arms, both shivering from cold, and crying. I stopped and gave the woman a clean handkerchief to wipe their tears, gave her enough money for two days' food, insisting that she go at once to a restaurant nearby and procure a good, warm breakfast for herself and her baby, and took her address for our office files. Mr. Zuckerman strongly disapproved of all this, and reproached me angrily, shouting: "You capitalists! You create the poor people — you are responsible for the condition of the poor, and in order to ease your conscience, you give some unfortunate a little nothing on the street and think you are doing your duty."

When I asked him what else he would do in such a case, he argued that we were not dealing with individuals, but with principles. "You have to do away with capitalism and with profit so that there will be no poor and no millionaires," he would say.

Months later, when I spoke at a massmeeting in Chicago, held on behalf of the war sufferers, I mentioned Mr. Zuckerman's charges against me and remarked, jokingly, that his accusation was unfounded, since I was a capitalist without capital.

My above-mentioned talk to the newspapermen of Warsaw on loyalty to the Polish government made a deep impression upon them. Dr. Bogan, who usually disagreed with me, this time came over and congratulated me. He apologized for having misunderstood me, and said he now realized that what I was trying to do was right.

* * *

Among the interesting experiences I had in Warsaw, was one that was particularly striking. Early one morning, I was awakened at my hotel with the information that a little boy was waiting downstairs and insisted on seeing me. The hotel employees had tried to chase him away, but he refused to go, and they did not know what to do with him. I instructed them to send him up in about half an hour.

When he came up, I saw that he was about fourteen years old. He told me his name was Abram Leshovitzky, and that it had taken him eight days, walking and hitch-hiking, to get to Warsaw from his town. There were four other children at home, he said, three boys and a girl. His mother had died of starvation, and his father was somewhere in New York. Having heard that we were there to help the poor, he had come to report himself as one of them, and wanted to know what we could do for them. I inquired as to where he had spent the night, and he said he had slept in a Jewish home about five miles outside of Warsaw, and had risen about four o'clock that morning, and come directly to my hotel.

Before questioning him any further, I invited him to have breakfast with me, and asked him what he would like. "Bread and tea," he replied. When I suggested eggs or oatmeal, he opened his eyes in wide surprise. I took him to breakfast and ordered cereal, eggs, tea, sugar and cream for him, and when the food was brought, and he began to eat, I had to turn my head away to hide my tears at the sight. He ate like a hungry little animal that had not had food for a long time.

When he finished, I talked things over with him. I suggested that instead of his asking me what we could do for him, he should tell me what he would like us to do.

"First of all," he said, "I have a letter addressed to my father, written by me, in Yiddish. I want you to see that it reaches him as soon as possible." If mailing it was impractical, he said, he would like me to keep it with me until I returned to New York. He gave me the letter to read, and called my attention to the part where he had written, "Mother took sick and died." He did not want to mention that her death was caused by starvation, as it would be too great a shock for his father, and cautioned me against telling his father the truth.

The boy's second request was that we give him food rather than money.

"I understand," he said, "that you have flour and milk, and that is what I want."

"Why not money?" I asked.

"No matter how much money you give us," he replied wisely, "it will not last very long, and the children will again have nothing to eat. If you give me enough flour and milk and oil, and have it sent to my home, I will start a little business with it. One of the girls has to have shoes, so I will sell something and buy her shoes. The other one has to have a coat — she can't go out, as she is half-dressed. I will do the same for her. Whatever I sell will make me a little money, and in that way I will try to keep up."

His sense of responsibility, for one so young, surprised me. I made a note of everything he said, and instructed him to come to our office, where his wants would be taken care of. It was sweet and amusing to hear the child refer to his brothers and sisters as "my children," never using the term, "brothers" or "sisters." We bought the boy some clothes and saw to it that he was sent home properly and was taken care of. As the mails were uncertain, I kept his letter to his father with me, intending to deliver it personally on my return to New York.

On the day I returned, a luncheon was given for me by the board of directors of the Central Relief Committee. It was a semi-public affair, to which anyone interested was welcome to come. In relating my experiences abroad, I spoke about this boy, and even read the letter addressed to his father. Suddenly a voice in the audience shouted: "That is my child!" The man who had thus cried out had risen excitedly to his feet, then he swayed for a moment, and fell back weakly into his chair.

One of the newspapermen present told me later that no one would believe such a thing could happen in real life. It was exactly like a scene on the stage. My daughter-in-law was present when this dramatic incident occurred, and she felt the same way about it, as did many others.

Three months later, in October, 1919, Abram and "his children" arrived in New York to join their father. Their pictures and an article describing the episode appeared in a New York newspaper on October 28, 1919, and many other papers carried accounts of this unusual case.

Several other experiences I had in Warsaw might prove interesting. One evening, while eating in a restaurant, I saw the face of a little child, her nose pressed against the window. Hearing one of the waiters tell another, "Go and chase that beggar away," I rose and went with him. When the child saw us coming, she began to run, and cried: "I only wanted to ask for a piece of bread!" I spoke to her in Yiddish, and asked her to come back with me and I would give her something to eat.

She was a little girl about eight years of age, and she was shaking with fear, cold and hunger. I took her inside, and asked the proprietor to build a little fire in the stove so that she might warm herself. He refused, however, saying he could not spare the wood. I thereupon took a chair that was standing in the corner, broke it up and demanded he use it to start a fire, advising him that I would pay for the chair. I said nothing more to the child, but just gave her food. It is painful to describe how she ate it.

After finishing her meal, she told me that she lived with her grandmother in a cellar, and all they had was what she got from begging. Her grandmother could not go out, she told me, being too old and sick. I hired a cab and took the child home. I was horrified at sight of the place. They lived in a deep cellar, without air, heat or light, except for a flickering little candle. I saw to it that the old woman and child were placed where they could receive medical attention and other care.

Another experience, in a lighter vein, took place one day while I was out riding in a cab. I might remark here that the horses in Poland were then just as hungry as the people, and could not go very fast, but dragged along slowly. As we were proceeding at this pace, a little girl about nine years old jumped up on the step of the cab and greeted me in Yiddish. When I asked her what she wanted, she said:

"Well, I see you are an American, so I think you ought to give me a dollar." (She pronounced it "doolar.")

I lifted her into the cab, and said to her, in Yiddish: "You made a mistake. I am not an American, and therefore I cannot give you a 'doolar'."

She looked at me doubtfully, then took hold of my coat lapel and felt the quality of the cloth.

"This cloth is not Polish," she said. "You are an American, and you ought to give me a dollar." She insisted that was all she wanted, and I would make her happy by giving it to her.

I thereupon gave her a dollar in paper money, and a half dollar in silver. At this, she looked at me with her prettiest smile, and pleaded:

"Why split it? Why do you make it a dollar and a half? Make it two whole dollars, and this will be a great day for me and my mother."

I added another dollar, making it two and a half dollars in all, and just to see what she would say, asked her for the return of the first half dollar, as change. Grabbing my hand and kissing it, she retorted:

"You rich American want to take money back from me? I know you do not mean it!" And she jumped out and ran off, calling back, "God should bless you!"

I received one day a visit from a unique individual, a well known Chassidic Rabbi of that region, whose appearance was quite astonishing. He stood about six and a half feet tall, and was very erect and well proportioned. He wore a blond beard that reached down to his waist, his blond hair flowed over his shoulders, and his sideburns hung down like ropes, almost to his knees. He had blue eyes and well chiselled features. His appearance was actually awe-inspiring, and I was told that when he entered the hotel, the boys at the desk were frightened — they thought it was Jesus. They had been instructed not to permit anyone to come up to my room without announcing him, but when they saw this amazing person, they asked no questions. They simply bowed, and showed him the way to my room. When I opened my door in answer to their knock, I was so surprised and taken aback at the unexpected sight, that it was several seconds before I recovered sufficiently to greet the Rabbi and ask him to enter.

He shook hands with me, and informed me that he was a Chassidic Rabbi and had come to see me to secure money to provide kosher food and matzos for the Jewish Polish soldiers for the Passover. I asked him to be seated, so that we could discuss the matter. There were two chairs in my room, one of which was too small for him. The other, though wide enough, was very low. I suggested that he make his choice of the chairs or the bed, and he chose the low chair.

We had been talking about twenty minutes, trying to determine how much money would be needed for his purpose, when an American newspaperman of my acquaintance, Mr. Tobias Tobankin, came in. I introduced him to the Rabbi, and he entered into our discussion concerning kosher food for the Jewish soldiers. It was his opinion, he said, that since the Jewish soldiers were being fed by the government, it would be unjust to supply them with kosher food, at the expense of the poor people, who had no government food; that the soldiers could get along on "Pesach" with the same food they had every day.

At this, the Rabbi looked Mr. Tobankin straight in the eyes for a few seconds, and then started slowly to rise. Mr. Tobankin was a very short fellow, and as he watched the Rabbi rising slowly from his very low chair, he thought, as he afterwards told me, that there would be no end to the Rabbi. Towering over the little newspaperman, the Rabbi shouted at him dramatically:

"You advise that Jews should eat leavened bread and 'traife' food on Pesach! Do you know what that means, according to the Jewish religion? It means death for you!"

I saw poor Mr. Tobankin tremble under the stare of that huge figure, and I came to his defense by explaining to the Rabbi that American young men were not aware of the strictness of the Jewish laws, and that he should forgive him, which he did.

Mr. Tobankin later whispered to me that if it were possible to get a picture of the Rabbi, it would be of great interest and wonder to the Jews in America. After he left, I made this suggestion to the Rabbi, but after a moment of silence, he shook his head. I then offered him fifty dollars, to be donated to any charity he chose, if he would consent to being photographed, but again he shook his head. I raised my offer to one hundred dollars, but he answered:

"My friend, I know you mean well, and God bless you for it, but neither you nor anyone else can buy a picture of me, for the purpose of displaying it."

With that we parted, and I made the necessary arrangements to furnish kosher food and matzos to the Jewish soldiers.

* * *

While walking along the street one day, I met a Jewish army doctor whom I knew, wearing his official uniform. I told him I was on my way to confer with a committee of Rabbis concerning a certain district of Warsaw which they felt was not receiving sufficient aid, and invited him to come with me. We found six Rabbis at the appointed place, all of whom had fine faces, but were heavily bearded and wore long garments and funny looking hats. I introduced my friend, and we began to talk about the matter in hand.

The doctor, however, interrupted us, to deliver a little lecture to the Rabbis. The Jews of the world, he said, were suffering because of the people among them who dressed and acted as they did.

"You do not belong in a civilized world," he cried, "and it is no wonder that Jews are being mistreated and degraded when they have representatives like you. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves. You ought to throw away these rags, and appear like men. Now you look like wild animals."

I was greatly embarrassed at this outburst, but the Rabbis merely smiled, and one of them said:

"My dear doctor, you are a Jew and I am a Jew. Clothes and appearance are not going to change that fact. In America, doctors wear clothes of your type, while in Poland the Rabbis wear clothes like those we have on. It is apparent from your outburst that you are not only angry with us, but also with yourself. I know you are sorry that you are a Jew. But that won't help you.

"Remember that the Jewish people are like the earth — you trample on it, you spit on it, you kick it! But do you know what the earth contains? It contains all kinds of gold and silver, all kinds of minerals, and all kinds of food. Everything that a human being has comes from the earth. Without it, you could not live. All that is good in the world comes from the earth. The civilization that you speak of comes from the Jews. Wherever you turn, you will find that to become a doctor or a philosopher, you have to seek your sources of learning from the Jews.

"And now, my dear doctor, I thank you for the lecture you have given us, and we would like to continue our talk with this gentleman about securing food and clothing for the hungry and the poor."

The embarrassed doctor left without saying a word. I tried to explain that it was really not his fault — that he had been brought up in a different environment and a different country.

"I believe that he is an exceptional person," said one of the Rabbis. "A man of that type is very seldom found."

"In what respect do you mean?" I asked.

"Well," said he, "it is very seldom that you find a doctor, an educated man, an American, wearing a uniform, and a Jew, who is yet such a 'shayteh' (idiot)."

One of the Rabbis then turned to me, and said: "I want you to know, you Americans are running a race here with the Angel of Death. We can tell by our records which of you is ahead. When you continue to send us food and money, you are in the lead, and there are fewer funerals among us. But when you slacken in this work, the Dread Destroyer out-distances you, as is evidenced by the increase in funerals."

In my report later, at a meeting in New York, I repeated the Rabbi's words. Thereafter, the story of the race between American money and the Angel of Death was frequently used in soliciting funds.

* * *

While in New York, before I left for Europe, I had received a letter from a business acquaintance, Mr. David Friedlander, informing me that he had a sister by the name of Marila Friedlander, somewhere in Warsaw. He asked me to try to find her, and if possible, bring her with me on my return to America.

I made inquiries and located the girl. She was living in a small, cold room, with her stepmother, and was trying to earn a living by giving piano lessons. She was happy to hear from her brother, and arrangements were made for her to accompany me on my return journey.

Through Miss Friedlander, I became acquainted with her stepbrother, Max Grundhand, a highly intelligent young man, though very poor. In order to help him out, I asked him to act as my interpreter and as my companion, whenever necessary. I also assigned to him the task of making inquiries about my oldest brother and his family, who lived in Woronowo. We had not heard from them during the war, and though we sent them money at various times, we never knew whether or not it reached them. I assured him that I would see he was well taken care of, if he could arrange to get through to them. After some consideration, he informed me that he was willing to undertake the journey to Woronowo, and would either bring my brother back with him to Warsaw, or bring word from him.

I cautioned young Grundhand to be careful to secure the proper documents from the civil and military authorities, and aided him in securing his passport and traveling permit. However, since I was not acquainted with conditions in the section to which he was going, I had to inform him that I could assume no responsibility, and he would have to go at his own risk. He was willing to do so, and left shortly afterward.

Some three weeks later, I received one of the greatest surprises of my life. Answering a knock on my door about six o'clock one morning, I opened it, to find standing before me young Grundhand, my brother Aron, and his daughter, Rhea. All three were haggard, pale and hungry-looking, and their clothes were wrinkled and shabby. The only words Grundhand could say were: "Here are your brother and his daughter. I have to leave. I will see you tomorrow."

My brother was so weak that he could hardly speak. I at once took him and his daughter to a nearby hotel, as there was no room for them where I stayed. I ordered a substantial breakfast for them, consisting of cereal, eggs, rolls and butter. When he saw the food, the tears rolled down my brother's face, and he said he had not seen such food for years. He felt he ought not to sit there eating it, when his wife and children at home were living on synthetic bread and oatmeal, and tea without sugar or milk.

He described how, without actually being on the battlefield, he and his family had suffered all the horrors of war. Before the Russians entered their town, he related, he had hidden all his metal dishes, his copper and brass utensils and silverware, in a pit which he dug in the rear of his house. It seems that someone saw him, and when the Russians marched into the town, the commander of the troops was informed. They opened the pit, took everything they found there, and arrested him, and took him with them. He was informed that he would be given a trial the next day, and would be shot. He was charged with hiding these precious metals for the use of the Germans. As luck would have it, the German troops were then advancing toward the town, and the Russians retreated before them, leaving my brother to be taken over by the Germans, who released him. Aron attributed this fortunate occurrence to our father in heaven, and insisted that he had interceded for him.

For the next three days, he and his daughter told me of their experiences during the four and a half years of the war. Under the German occupation, they said, they were treated quite well, and their chief trouble was getting food. What small quantities they were able to secure was of the poorest kind. They had just barely enough to keep alive.

It was difficult, too, for the townspeople to become accustomed to the discipline imposed by the Germans, and their amazing efficiency. Every few days, inspectors would go through the houses to see that the floors were scrubbed, the windows cleaned, and everything in order. My brother did not have it so bad, at that time, as two officers were quartered in his house, and most of the necessary work was done by the soldiers.

From the first day they came until they left, he said, the Germans were busy making improvements in the town. The streets were paved, the houses supplied with running water, telephones and electric lights were installed, and schools opened for the purpose of teaching German to the children. Every few weeks, the officials would give parties that were free to all, and at these affairs they would speak to the townspeople, in an effort to win them over. They urged friendship toward the Germans, stating that they intended to remain there for good, and that everybody would be happy. They looked after the health of the people, and gave them medical care. Still, the inhabitants suffered through lack of sufficient nourishment.

After a few days, when young Grundhand had recuperated from his experience, he gave me details concerning his trip. It had taken him a couple of weeks to make the journey from Warsaw to Woronowo, which should ordinarily have taken only about twenty-four hours, and at one time he came near being shot. He described how my brother and his family had started to cry with happiness when he had appeared at their door and told them he was sent by me, and that I was in Warsaw. They had been sitting around the table, wondering how they would procure food for the coming Passover, and feeling very hopeless. They could hardly believe that what Mr. Grundhand told them was true, until he showed them a letter from me.

My brother and his daughter remained with me for three months, until they had fully recovered from the experiences they had undergone during the war. I then secured the necessary documents to enable them to make their return trip safely, and sent them back home with the assurance that they would be well taken care of.

* * *

I now made preparations for my return to America, experiencing some difficulty in securing the necessary papers for Miss Marila Friedlander, who was to come with me. However, this was finally arranged, and we left as planned.

On the way, we stopped for a few days in Paris. The Versailles Treaty was then being negotiated, and several times I saw President Wilson riding through the streets, with escorts preceding and following him. I also met the committee of Jews that had been sent to plead in the interests of Jewish minority rights in all countries, among the members of this committee being Louis Marshall, Dr. Cyrus Adler and Judge Julian W. Mack.

I had several conversations with Mr. Marshall, in which I told him what I had learned of the plight of the Jews in Poland, and urged the importance of raising money for relief. He, on the other hand, described what his committee was accomplishing in securing minority rights for Jews in European countries.

During my stay in Paris, I visited one of the cemeteries, where World War soldiers were buried. I counted six Jewish names among seventy-five graves, and these names were engraved on crosses, like the others. I took this matter up as soon as I arrived in New York, and several weeks later received the information that the crosses had been replaced by "Mogen Dovids."

At that time Paris was the happiest place in the world. France went wild with joy of victory, and was preparing to join her allies in the division of the spoils from the defeated Germany. There was happiness on the face of every Frenchman. Happy, too, were the American soldiers, who had come to Paris from the battlefields, eager to enjoy themselves to the full after their harrowing experiences.

As I later told my audiences in America, if they wanted to see truly representative Americans, they could have found them among these American soldiers in Paris. The Frenchmen, as a nation, are rather dark and short. In strong contrast to them were our American soldiers, especially those who came from the farms and small towns. Like the English soldiers, they were tall and erect, most of them good-looking, and all very courteous. It was a great pleasure to me, while in Paris, to meet and speak to them, and spend time with them. Quite often I would stop an American soldier or officer on the street and ask for a cigaret, just to make conversation. If he had one, he never hesitated a second in offering it.

After obtaining the necessary papers, Miss Friedlander and I proceeded to Vienna. If I thought I had seen misery in Poland, I really saw it in Vienna, the city that had once been such a pleasant place to visit. The people had no proper food of any kind, living on synthetic bread and coffee. They had no fats, no meats, and no sweets except saccharine. An American Colonel whom I met at the hotel remarked to me that if ever a people had reached the highest state of civilization and were deserving of friendliness and kindness, it was those poor people of Austria, and especially of Vienna. I had taken enough food with me from Paris to last us for a few days, but disposed of most of it to people who were starving.

One day I went into a restaurant and ordered coffee. All they could give me, they said, was black, imitation coffee, and nothing else. I was interested to see how this synthetic coffee tasted, and ordered a cup. An important-looking man came in and sat down at my table. Also ordering coffee, he took out of his pocket and unwrapped two sandwiches, which proved to be bread and cheese. When he saw me drinking the coffee, with nothing to accompany it, he offered me one of his sandwiches. Of course, I refused to take it, informing him that I had food at home. I learned to my surprise, upon conversing further with him, that he was a Jew, although he did not appear to be one. He told me his story, how he had been a dealer and exporter of silks, but now, of course, was ruined.

I learned that there were thousands of Jewish refugees in and around Vienna, without home or country. The Vienna branch of the American Joint Distribution Committee of the United States, headed by Mrs. Anita Miller, was caring for them as best they could. Most of the people were living in freight cars. I went out to see them, and counted one string of fifteen cars with eighteen or twenty people huddled in each one. Mrs. Miller and her sister had arranged to feed these unfortunate souls with bread, soup and potatoes once or twice a day.

My attention was drawn to a man with a long beard, who was sitting in mourning for his wife, who had died the day before. He was trying to teach the Kaddish (prayer in memory of the dead) to a little boy beside him. I approached him, and inquired how he had come to be there, and he replied, in both sorrow and anger:

"While the great nations are dividing the world among themselves, they have forgotten about us. First we were Austrians, then we were Poles. Now the Poles say that we belong to Slovakia, and Slovakia says that we belong to Poland. So we have to live here and wait until your great president and the other leaders of the world decide what is to become of us."

It was sad for me to realize from these experiences of what little value are human beings in time of war, and what little interest nations have in the sufferings of individuals. What a terrible crime it is for people to wage war, one against the other, and have less regard for human suffering than for that of wild beasts!

* * *

When we prepared to embark on our steamer, the S. S. La Savoy, for America, we found that her crew had declared a strike, and we had to wait around at the port for several days. When we finally sailed, we found that about six hundred American soldiers were also returning on that boat. They made things quite lively, and the trip was not bad.

However, my ward, who was a very intelligent and accomplished young girl, was very discontented, and was often difficult to deal with. Among other things, she complained at having to share her stateroom with another woman, wishing to be by herself; and was always late in coming to meals.

Two days before landing, the captain gave a dinner and arranged a gala evening of entertainment. Some of the ship's officers had heard Miss Friedlander play the piano, upon which instrument she was an accomplished performer, and asked me to get her to play for them on that evening. She consented to do so, but when the time arrived, she changed her mind and refused to perform. I had to use all my powers of persuasion to get her to come up and play for the waiting guests. She played so brilliantly that the audience applauded her for many minutes when she finished.

The Polish Consul, who was present, afterward made a speech in which he extolled her performance, boasting about the talent to be found in Poland. As she did not look Jewish, it was taken for granted that she was a Polish girl. In spite of her temperamental behavior, Marila was good company and very attractive, and was much sought after.

Upon arriving in New York, I was greeted by newspapermen and several friends, who were eager to hear of my experiences, several of which I related to them. Among those waiting for us at the pier were Marila's father, brothers and sisters. Their meeting, which was marked by much kissing and crying, was very touching. They came over and thanked me for taking care of their girl, and I replied good-humoredly: "All I want of you is a receipt that I have delivered the goods as per instructions."

Upon returning to Chicago, I was informed that a meeting and reception had been arranged for me, to be held that very afternoon. Instead of going home from the railroad station, as I would have liked to do, I had to go directly to the large hall in the Chicago Hebrew Institute, where the meeting was being held. The place was filled to capacity. Presiding was Mr. S. J. Rosenblatt, vice-president of the Chicago Jewish Relief Committee, and the acting chairman during my absence.

I spoke for almost an hour, relating my experiences while abroad. Mr. Rosenblatt then handed me a check for $100,000.00, which was part of the amount that had been raised for the war sufferers while I was away. This I immediately turned over to a representative of the American Joint Distribution Committee who had accompanied me from New York. An additional check, in the amount of $150,000.00, was later also turned over to the Committee. I have in my files photographs of both of these checks.

For several months after my return, I was called upon to travel about and give talks about the situation in Europe, as I had found it. Other speakers on these programs were men like Judge Harry M. Fisher and Mr. James Becker. The West Side and South Side Jews co-operated in this work, and together raised literally millions of dollars for the war sufferers.

It gave me great pleasure to learn that my report on conditions in Poland was favorably commented upon by Israel Zangwill, in his book, "Voice of Jerusalem," which was published a year or two later.

* * *

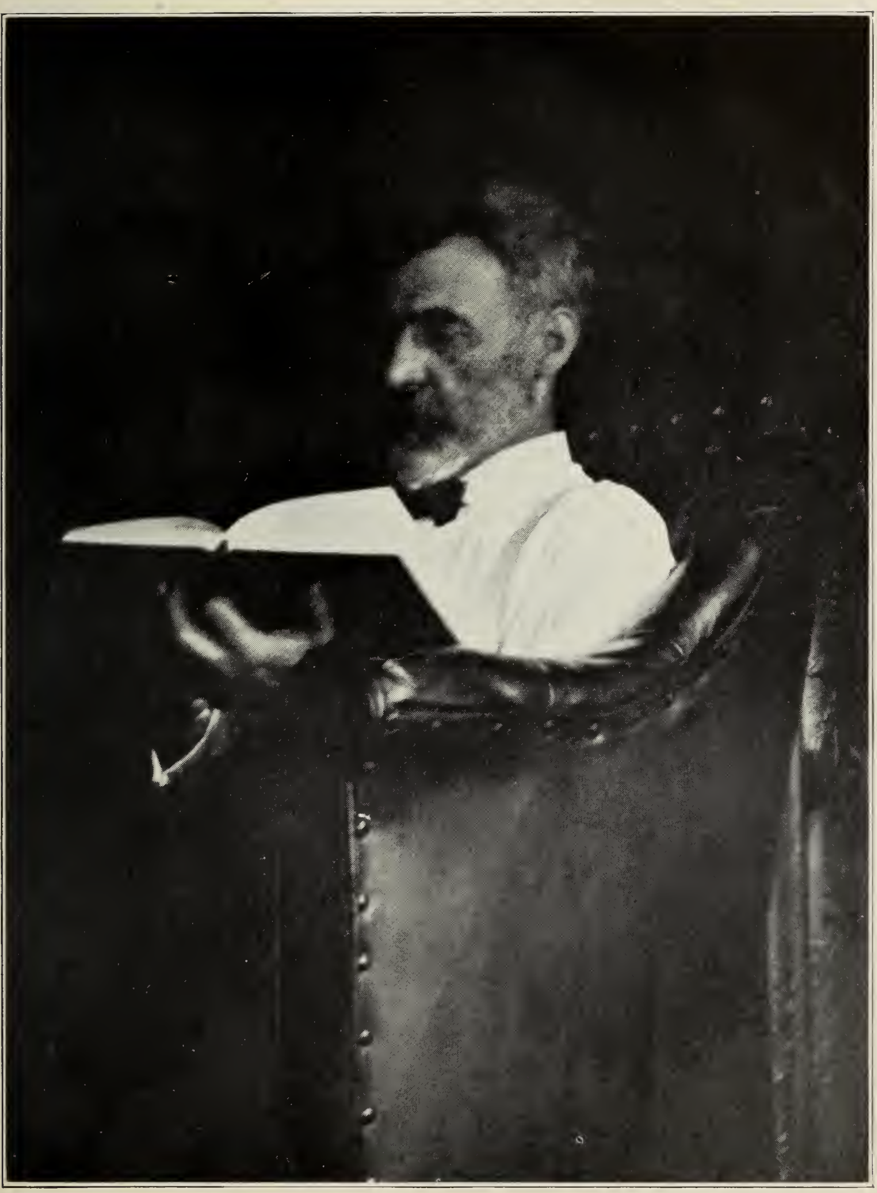
In the midst of these exciting times, I was grief-stricken and bowed down by the illness and death of my beloved brother, Harris. I was aware that his health was not very good at this period, but I had no conception of how seriously ill he was until I saw him on my return from this trip. As I remarked to my friends, Harris looked as bad as some of the unfortunate, starving people I had seen in Europe, and I was distressed and appalled. Harris realized what I felt, and exerted his best efforts to smile and appear optimistic; but I knew he was a "candidate for the grave."

Several months afterward, he was confined to his bed, and on October 5, 1920, he left this world.

Up to about three weeks before his death, he never thought or talked about dying, but always spoke of how long it would be before he got well. When he later realized there was no hope, he began to talk to me about it, but always spoke as though I, and not he, were the sick one, whose feelings had to be spared.

One day he said to me: "You know, there is an end to everything — there is an end to sickness and to man's life, and I have reached the stage when I will have to depart from this world. I have no regrets nor complaints to make. I have a fine family. While I have not been a rich man, I have never been poor, and I have had most of the comforts that the average man can expect. Though not rich materially, I have enjoyed all the pleasure that one can have intellectually."

I could not bear such talk, and was so deeply affected that I went out to wash my face so that he might not notice my tears. When I returned, he spoke to me again, saying:



Snapshot of Harris Horwich Taken Shortly Before He Passed Away.

"I have something on my mind to discuss with you, but before I do so, I want to tell you a story I read some time ago. A dying man instructed his lawyer to prepare a will for him, and during the procedure, the lawyer interrupted the man frequently to give him advice on various matters. Finally the sick man lost patience and said to his attorney, 'See here, Mr. Lawyer, who is going to die, I would like to know — you or I?'

"Now," continued Harris, "I am the interested party in this case, so don't interrupt me while I tell you what I want to say."

My poor brother laughed appreciatively at the conclusion of his story, but, alas, I could not laugh.

"What makes you think," I asked him, "that you cannot get well, and why do you talk like this?"

"You can believe me," he replied, "when I say that I know — even though the doctor did not tell me."

"How?" I asked.

With a despairing expression on his face, he replied: "I cannot read any more—I cannot concentrate my mind on reading—and this is a sign of death."

Then he added: "I have but one complaint against my fate." And he quoted from Lamentations, " 'They that are slain with the sword are better than they that are slain with hunger.' " For many months he had not been able to swallow any food. He was dying inch by inch of starvation, and he looked it.

I sat speechless beside him, trying to think of something to say, but could find no words.

But Harris kept speaking, and now he told me about a discussion that two professors had had. They were arguing, he said, as to which experienced the greatest intensity of feeling in the case of a wild beast attacking and tearing to pieces a tame animal. Which emotion was the stronger — the joy of the hungry beast in getting something to eat, or the fright and pain of the poor lamb that was being devoured?

"Do you think," I said, "that this is the proper time to think about such things and tell them to me?"

He answered, somewhat apologetically: "All these months, when you came to visit me every night, this question came to my mind, and I wondered whether your feeling of distress for my condition was more intense than the happiness I enjoyed in having you with me."

A week before he died, he was removed to the hospital. When he closed his eyes forever, his family and those about him could not help but feel relieved that he was thus healed of his suffering, knowing the untold agony he had endured in the last months of his illness.

As I gazed upon the body of my brother, I meditated upon how amazing it was that this shrunken, empty shell could have contained so much wisdom, humor and intellect.

To the mourning family, I promised: "Not a day of my life will pass that I will not speak his name, tell of his greatness, or remember what he was to me."

Harris left a widow and six children: Morris, Anna (who married H. L. Friedlen), Bessie (who married Bert Margolis), Florence (who married Robert Cohen), David (who married Sally Brownstein), and Edna.

A few years after Harris passed away, his widow died, and within the next several years Bessie, Anna and Morris followed them. Morris was wounded during the war, and after much suffering, died in a government hospital.

Harris' children reflected the good looks and intelligence of their parents. An outstanding personality is his son, David, who has inherited the high intellect of his father and the modesty and unassuming gentility of his mother. He has been, for some years, vice president of the well known firm of Lord & Thomas. I was proud and happy to learn from one of the heads of that organization that they regard him very highly and consider him a valuable asset to the firm.

* * *

The thousands of addresses I had secured in Poland from people wishing to contact relatives and friends in the United States, I turned over to the office of the Chicago Relief Committee. I assisted them in the tremendous task of notifying people and answering letters of inquiry, which kept me busy for months. I discovered that while the people here were anxious and willing to help their relatives abroad, they were unable to transmit money through reliable sources. Regular communication had not yet been established, and local banks refused to assume the responsibility of delivering funds to people in the war-stricken countries. I was besieged with requests to arrange for transmitting such funds.

I took the matter up with several interested people, and after some discussion it was decided that the best thing to do would be to gather together the money offered for that purpose, and that someone be delegated to take it with him to Europe and distribute it personally. Although this was aside from the work of the relief committee, we managed to gather together a large sum, running into tens of thousands of dollars, and it fell upon me to take these funds to Europe and distribute them as specified. It proved to be a rather difficult and thankless task, but I managed to do a fair job.

When I arrived in Warsaw, on this second journey, I wrote to all those for whom I had funds, asking them to come and identify themselves, upon which they would receive their money.

These funds were represented by letters of credit for Polish marks, in the value of the American dollars. However, the state of the Polish mark, which was the current unit of exchange, was very unstable, and was dropping steadily in value. I encountered a great deal of difficulty in this regard, and had to watch the market closely. I finally decided it would be more expedient to pay in American dollars, rather than in marks, but there were no dollars available for me. After considering the problem and attempting various plans, I was able to make arrangements with the American Consul, who was then receiving American dollars in large numbers in his office, to pay me dollars against my letters of credit. Thus I managed to pay the people in American money. This was considered quite a feat on my part, and was a boon to the people, as American money was regarded as something sacred during this turbulent period.

I had many interesting experiences in connection with this work, one of which I particularly remember. Among those who came to collect their funds, were a certain woman and her daughter, who identified themselves through their passports and a letter from the Rabbi of their town. After she had answered all questions satisfactorily, I informed the woman that I had $400.00 for her. She was so surprised and overjoyed at this news, that she began to tremble, and her daughter actually had to hold her up to keep her from fainting. For several moments she stood murmuring over and over again, "Four hundred dollars! Four hundred dollars!"

When she had recovered a little, she said: "So much money! That is a fortune. My good husband sent it to me. How can I ever be thankful enough to God for such a miracle?"

Upon her request, I advised her carefully how to handle this money, explaining how she could place it in a bank and withdraw small amounts as needed, and arranged to send someone with her to see that she got to the bank safely.

As they were about to leave, the mother turned back to me and said: "There is one favor I would like you to do for me."

"What is that?" I asked.

"I would like to have the honor of kissing your hand," she replied.

With that she tried to grasp my hand, but I told her laughingly, not wanting to hurt her feelings:

"Now I see you are a woman of understanding. What pleasure do you think it is for a man to have a sad-faced, hungry-looking woman kiss his hand? If you really want to please me, why don't you have your young daughter kiss my face, instead of you kissing my hand?"

The mother immediately turned to her daughter and exclaimed: "You heard what this gentleman said! Why do you stand there like a fool?"

The girl blushingly lifted her face to me, but I smiled and said: "Never mind, I was just joking. Go home, and be blessed, and God will help you, and I will tell your father how nice you both are."

* * *

Before leaving, I arranged that in the future the money sent from Chicago to Poland should be distributed by a Mr. H. Farbstein, a deputy of the Polish Parliament, who agreed to undertake this task, opening an office in Warsaw for the purpose.

I also engaged a Mr. William Zuckerman, a newspaperman whom I had known in Chicago, to go to Danzig and open an office there, for the distribution of funds. He later opened an office in Berlin, and money was sent continuously to both places.

In the meantime, we were receiving demands for the distribution of funds in Roumania, and I engaged Mr. Max Grundhand, whom I have mentioned previously, to establish an office in Bucharest.

All these arrangements were made through the Public State Bank of Chicago, of which I was the president. Although we made a small charge for our work in transferring and delivering money to the proper parties, we found, after three years, that we were suffering considerable losses, and finally had to give it up.

The three men I engaged to open branch offices were the only ones to benefit from the venture. Mr. Farbstein is now in Palestine, Mr. Grundhand is living in Bucharest and is a well known business man, and Mr. Zuckerman is now an outstanding journalist, living in London.

The American Joint Distribution Committee had also opened a branch in Poland, for the purpose of transmitting funds from America, but it soon became a tremendous task, and they also had to give it up. During that time they handled millions of dollars, which had to be changed into the currency of the country and distributed to the proper individuals. They encountered untold difficulties and were besieged with complaints. The greatest problems were those caused by the fluctuating rates of exchange.

For example, a man would deposit $100.00 to be paid to his wife through the Committee in the equivalent value in marks as of that date. According to the rate of exchange at that time, the wife would be entitled to receive, say, 15 marks for each dollar, or 1500 marks. By the time the remittance reached the office of the Committee in Poland, however, the exchange rate of the mark had depreciated to, say, 20 marks per dollar, so that the original $100.00 was now equivalent to 2,000 marks. But as the transaction had already been completed and the Committee had purchased the marks for the woman in question at the rate of 15 marks per dollar, all they could pay her, naturally, was 1500 marks. The recipient would complain that she had not received full value, regardless of the fact that the Committee could do nothing about this state of affairs.

Although the claimants, most of whom were women, had the situation carefully explained to them and were aware of the fact that the Committee could not possibly be held responsible, they conducted themselves in an exceedingly unpleasant manner. A few marks more or less meant a great deal to them, and they were loud and persistent in their attempts to collect what they insisted they were entitled to. They made the Committee a great deal of trouble, going so far as to protest to the Rabbis, interrupting Sabbath services in the synagogues, and hanging around the office of the Committee, arguing and threatening.

Incidents of this type were numerous, and hampered the work of distribution badly. I afterward learned, from reliable sources, that Mr. Felix Warburg, the president of the American Joint Distribution Committee, had personally put up half a million dollars, to cover a large percentage of these claims, although the Committee was in no way responsible.

* * *

On my way home from my second trip to Poland, I stopped off for a few weeks in Germany. The Versailles Treaty had been signed and peace reigned — but Germany was a ruined country. Everywhere was desolation and despair.

It was bad enough in Poland, with people hungry and starving, but at least in that country there was some life and activity. Business was being transacted, and one could see people in the restaurants, eating and drinking. The nation was beginning to recover from its wounds.

But how different in Germany! Here was an entire people, sad, disheartened, disappointed — weary and ill from lack of nourishment. Everywhere were sallow, cheerless faces, without hope. It was a pitiful thing to behold. I had taken some food with me from Warsaw, but on the way to Berlin gave most of it up to half-starved people. I assumed that when I reached Berlin I would be able to secure other provisions. What was my surprise to find, when I arrived, that there was simply no food to be had! It was impossible to obtain either bread, butter, eggs, sugar or meat. All that they had at the hotel where I stayed was imitation coffee and saccharine, and black bread in which had been mixed some kind of grass. I was afraid to eat it, and during the three days I spent in Berlin I lived on almost nothing. I had planned to stay for at least two weeks, but under those conditions, simply had to leave.

I felt that it would take a generation for those despairing, starving people to recuperate. The city looked neglected and deserted, and everything was shabby and dirty, so unlike the Germany I had known. There were no automobiles to be seen in Berlin. Cabs were used, but these were old and broken, and the horses that drew them could hardly stand up, from hunger. It was all very depressing.

Even Mr. Baruch Zuckerman, who hated Germany almost as much as he hated capitalists, had been greatly distressed by what he saw there, when he passed through. He admitted that the sight had brought tears to his eyes. It was hard to imagine, he said, that a whole nation — men, women and children — could look so yellow and show so much evidence of suffering on their faces. It is very, very bad to see such sights.

From Berlin, I went to Hamburg, which I was told was the only place I could get some food. I found things much better there, as they were beginning to receive a little food from other countries, by boat. But the once-busy port of Hamburg, that had been like a beehive, with a constant flow of incoming and outgoing ships and ceaseless activity, was now quiet and practically deserted.

I came there during the wintertime, and the hotels were very cold. I had contracted a bad cold during my trip, and was hardly able to speak. When I wanted some hot water with which to gargle, to relieve my sore throat, during the night, I could not get any, but had to make a small fire in my room, with paper and straw, in order to heat some.

During my stay, the hotelkeeper discussed the situation in Germany with me, and complained bitterly of President Wilson. He contended that while Wilson proclaimed to the world the principle of self-determination of a people, that every people had a right to choose its own government, he did not grant that right to the Germans. Furthermore, he added, if Germany had not been forced to change its form of government to a democracy, and if they still had the kaiser there, conditions would be a whole lot better. Apparently this was the attitude of the majority.

I had occasion to return to Germany two years later. Expecting to find the situation unchanged, I planned to stay only a few days. What was my astonishment to find things amazingly different! It was as though the German people had experienced a resurrection. They looked more like themselves. All kinds of food were available. The streets were clean, and busy with traffic. Automobiles had reappeared. Things were almost normal again.

It seems that during this period, the sympathy of the world had been aroused in favor of the defeated nation. There was a flood of visitors from other countries, who had come for the express purpose of helping the unfortunate people re-establish themselves. And Germany was again busy. Streets were being paved, houses built, railroads repaired, and manufacturing of all kinds of articles renewed. People were working and eating again.

The realization that Germany had been most unjustly dealt with in the Versailles treaty was dawning upon the world. Many Americans were beginning to feel that it had been wrong for the United States to enter the war and participate in drawing up so unjust a peace treaty. Book upon book began to appear, some even written by Englishmen, proving that Germany was not alone responsible for the war. Thus the German people gained the good will, compassion and assistance of the world. Through the sale of German bonds, billions of dollars poured into the country to aid in its rehabilitation. Before Hitler came into power, Germany was on the way to becoming again one of the finest countries in the world. Her people were comparatively prosperous, happy and free. Tourists began to arrive, by the tens of thousands, and the outlook was very favorable.

* * *

The supervision of the four branches that the Public State Bank had established for the distribution of funds in European countries, necessitated frequent trips to Europe on my part. On each of these, I was instrumental in sending over people to their relatives in America, and thus helped to re-unite several hundred families.

I felt largely compensated for my efforts in this connection when I received a letter from the New York Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering Through the War, commenting upon the services I had rendered. I quote from it, in part, as follows:

"Several times during the last few years, you have had occasion to be abroad and each time that you were there, by virtue of your presence, much has been accomplished that might have been left undone but for the wisdom that you have displayed in calling our attention to matters that required correction. . . . Every one of your trips brought to us a revelation of conditions that reflected your sensitiveness and compassion for the struggling masses of Jewry.

"Your description of the refugees, as imparted in a letter sent to us last year, has made it possible for us, through its circularization, to bring thousands upon thousands of dollars to us, because it awakened American Israel as never before to realize that the work yet to be done is vaster than all its accomplishments until now."

On my return from one of these trips, it was suggested that a dinner be held in New York, to be attended by all the people who had come over through my assistance, and that each one relate some experience in this connection that might be interesting. The affair was to have been held at the Broadway Central Hotel, and several well known men, including Mr. Warburg, Mr. Marshall and Mr. Rosenwald, had been invited to attend. But an unfortunate occurrence made it necessary to cancel our plans. While the arrangements were in progress, we received news that the noted Professor Israel Friedlander had been killed while on a mission in Europe.

Professor Friedlander, who was a native of Poland, was a man of great learning and talent. He was an instructor at the Jewish Theological Seminary, in New York, was the author of several books and had translated Dubnow's "History of the Jews." He had been asked to go to Poland, and if possible, to Russia, as one of a committee of three, to study conditions there, distribute funds and bring back reports. The other two members of the committee, Judge Harry M. Fisher, and Mr. Max Pine, a well-known labor leader of New York, had been assigned to different sections of those countries. While traveling from Poland to Russia, Professor Friedlander, and a companion, whom he had engaged to accompany him, were stopped by Russian soldiers and killed.

* * *

In the course of the several trips I made to Europe during this period, I took the time, on one of them, to visit my native Poniemon, which I had not seen for over forty years. I was anxious to view again the scenes of my childhood.

On arriving, I decided to go first to the home of the Rabbi of the town, although I did not know him. I found the door of his house open, and saw the Rabbi inside, sitting behind a big book which completely screened his face. Only his skull cap was visible behind it. I entered and knocked on a chair to draw his attention, upon which he raised his eyes above the rim of the book. At my "Good morning, Rabbi," he nodded his head somewhat vaguely, and disappeared again behind his book.

"Rabbi," I said, "I am a stranger from America. I want to have the pleasure of talking to you."

The man lifted his head, murmured something, and again disappeared from view.

"I see that you are engaged in the hard study of God's Torah," I commented, thinking this remark might draw him into conversation. But he only murmured something unintelligible and continued with his reading, paying no attention to me at all.

Finally, I said: "If you do not want to listen to me, I will have to leave. All I wanted to know is whether you knew my father, Yankel Horwich."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, putting the book down, and jumping up. "Yankel! Sholom! Sholom! Peace to you! You are the son of our unforgettable Reb Yankel! May he rest in peace! Why didn't you say so in the first place?"

"Well," I answered, "I had quite a time getting to the first place."

The Rabbi immediately became very attached to me, to such an extent, indeed, that it made me rather uncomfortable. He told me all he knew about my family, and talked especially about my father. Apparently, he considered my coming quite an event. The news spread, and soon the whole town was out on the street, surrounding me and greeting me, and asking me about their relatives in the United States.

I knew none of the townspeople, with the exception of two men and a woman. These were Chaim Hersh Bregstone and his wife, Reva, and a man by the name of Abe Meyer, "son of Moishe." The first-named was a brother of Joseph and Ike Breakstone of New York, whom I have previously mentioned.

Abe Meyer was an old man, of about ninety years, and blind, and a terrible hater of "Columbus and America." He held on to my arm for nearly half an hour, telling me what America had done to his two sons. They had forgotten all about the Jewish religion, he had learned. They never went to "schul," did not pray and did not eat "kosher" food, and were just like "Goyim." He told me he was busy day and night praying to God to have mercy on them.

I remained in Poniemon for a day and a half, and found my town very much the same as I had left it. I noticed, however, that while, in my time, the houses had been on a level with, or higher than, the street — the street now seemed to have risen considerably, and looked higher than the houses. This, no doubt, was due to the accumulation of dust for over forty years.

The Rabbi took me to see the old synagogue, which they still used. As a child, this synagogue was to me the greatest building and most important place I had ever seen. Now I found it to be a dilapidated wooden shanty. As I entered, memories of my childhood appeared before me. There were the same benches where I had stood beside my father, often for three or four hours at a time, hungry and miserable, beating my breast and praying and crying to God to forgive me for a multitude of sins which I had never committed — as well as for the sin I actually did commit with regard to Herr Ashfort, as related in the early pages of this book.

At my request, the Rabbi next took me to see the house where I was born. It had changed hands twice, and the rooms were somewhat altered. At the time of my visit, it was owned and occupied by a young couple, and I was pleased to see that it was being kept in rather nice condition. I asked to see the barn in the rear of the house, which caused some surprise, until I explained why.

When I was about thirteen years old, the other members of my family all went away one summer afternoon, leaving me and several of my young playmates at home. We decided to have a little private party and dug some potatoes from the garden with the intention of baking them. We found, however, that we had no wood for our fire. Undaunted, I hit upon a way of securing some, by chopping out the threshold of the barn, which I considered a nuisance and only in the way. I got a hatchet, and each of us chopped a little until we had chopped out the threshold. We built a fire, baked our potatoes, and were enjoying them, with sour milk, when my uncle, Chaim Eleazer, suddenly arrived on the scene. When he discovered how we had secured the wood for our fire, my troubles started.

Although my uncle was generally good-natured, he had a quick temper. He ordered us to at once take the cows out of the barn, as it was likely to collapse, claiming that the threshold was what kept the barn from falling down. He did not explain this to us calmly, but became very excited and shouted at us at the top of his voice. We forgot our potatoes and sour milk, as he chased us around with a whip, which he wielded right and left, until he became tired.

"Well," he remarked as he stopped, "I have done my duty. The rest I will leave to your mother."

When my mother came home, there was more scolding, beating and excitement. Later we talked about engaging someone to put in a new threshold, but as that would cost money, it was delayed from day to day, until the matter was forgotten.

Since this had been one of the major misdeeds of my youth, I had always had it on my conscience, and wondered whether anything had happened; so on this visit I was most anxious to see how the barn looked. To my great surprise and delight, I found that there was still no threshold in the barn, and that it was still standing, just as I had left it.

I then went to visit the grave of my father. Standing beside it with the Rabbi, who accompanied me, reciting the "kaddish," I lived over again my childhood days, and there rose again before me the image of my father, with the beautiful expression on his face which denoted his character, his piety and the loveliness of his spirit, which I shall never forget.

As we turned to go, I remarked to my companion: "I wonder when and where I will meet my father next."

"If you are as good as your father was," replied the Rabbi solemnly, "you will meet him in heaven."

"And what if I am not as good?" I could not help but ask.

Raising his eyes upward, the Rabbi replied: "I hope that you are at any rate good enough so that the great virtues of your father will protect you from going to the other place!"

While visiting at the home of the Bregstones, it was decided that a young girl of the family, by the name of Lea, should join her uncles and cousins in New York, and it was agreed that she meet me in Danzig, where I would make the necessary arrangements for her trip to America. I had to overcome many difficulties to accomplish this, but after spending almost two weeks on the matter, the required documents were finally secured, and Lea left for New York. An intelligent, good-looking and very clever girl, she quickly became Americanized, and after a time became associated with her uncle, Ike Breakstone, in the dairy business.

I have recently received a letter from Lea stating that she is married to a man by the name of Fred Wolf, is living in Port Chester, New York, and is very happy.

* * *

During the above-mentioned trip, I took part in a rather exciting episode. While I was occupied with my affairs in Warsaw, word was received that the Bolshevik soldiers, commanded by Trotzky, were approaching the city, and might take it within the next forty-eight hours. The war between Russia and Poland was then raging.

I received a notice from the American Consul in Warsaw to leave at once, as no one could tell what might happen. I made the necessary preparations during the night and the next morning set out for the railroad station, to take a train to Danzig. I was surprised to find the street for a block around the station packed with people and baggage — panic-stricken men, women and children pushing and elbowing each other to get to the trains. I was afraid I would not be able to get through, but by showing my special credentials, and handing out money right and left, I managed to find my way to a third class coach, although I had paid for first class accommodations. In the confusion, I lost two of my four pieces of baggage.

The train was so terribly crowded that, with the exception of the fortunate few who had come first and secured seats, we stood, packed so closely together that we could not move.

After riding thus for about two hours, I heard a woman moan: "I am dying. I am going under. Please help me." Although I heard her voice, I could not locate her because of all the people jammed against me. When the train stopped at the next station, I asked that someone find out what was the matter with the woman, but no one paid any attention. I was standing near a window, and opening it, I crawled out, with the intention of buying her something to drink at the station. No sooner had I touched the ground, than a railroad official seized me and told me I had committed an offense in doing this. I tried to explain to him that I had not been able to push my way to the door of the train, and that I only wanted to get a drink for a fainting woman. He would not listen, but took me to the station office and brought me before the stationmaster. When we had both told our stories, the stationmaster observed: "Though your intentions may have been all right, you have committed an offense; but I will be lenient." He fined me fifty marks.

After I paid the fine, I took out my passport and credentials, one of which was from the Secretary of the Polish Legation in Washington. The man thereupon offered to return the fifty marks, and apologized. I told him, however, that he could keep the money — that he could give it to the poor; but I wanted him to send a man with me so that I could buy something and get back to my car in safety. This was done, and on returning to the car, it took the guard fifteen or twenty minutes to clear a way for me to push through to where I had been before.

When I finally came to the woman I was seeking, I found her lying on the floor, and helped her to a sitting position. I offered her a glass of the lemonade I had bought, but she looked at me and cried rudely in a sharp, shrill voice: "Finally someone woke up to help a sick, fainting woman!" It was obvious then that she was neither sick nor fainting, but had merely wanted to attract attention, and the people in the car had a good laugh at my expense for all the trouble I had gone to.

* * *

In between these several trips to Europe, I was visited in Chicago by a committee headed by Mr. Max Korshak, who wanted me to accept the receivership of the 16th Street State Bank, which had been closed. He told me the depositors of the Lorimer Bank, of which I had acted as receiver, were very pleased with the way they had been taken care of. The 16th Street Bank also was located in a poor neighborhood, and the depositors were small shopkeepers and working people for the most part.

After hesitating a few days, I accepted. Several dividends were paid to the depositors, who then decided to re-organize the closed bank. The new enterprise was called the Superior State Bank, of which I was made president. For about seven years thereafter this bank did a fair business. When the depression came along, in order to protect the depositors, we turned it over to another bank, where the depositors received a hundred cents on the dollar, although I had to stand quite a loss, personally, in order to accomplish this. I do not believe it is out of order to state that I received no salary whatsoever while acting as receiver or as president of the bank.

Mr. J. Logan Fox was attorney for the bank during this period. He was a member of the firm of Brown, Fox & Blumberg. Mr. Brown, the senior member of that firm, had acted as my attorney when I was receiver of Lorimer's Bank.

I was later appointed receiver of the West Central State Bank, located on the corner of Ogden Avenue and Roosevelt Road. Deposits amounted to about $600,000.00, and there were several real estate holdings. The majority of the depositors were non-Jews. The bank was found to be in very bad condition, but matters were straightened out to everyone's satisfaction.

CHAPTER X

MY VISIT TO PALESTINE

During all these years, I was busy every day, and often until late at night, with activities relating to Zionism, the Jewish Charities, war relief, carrying my share of the responsibilities of operating our manufacturing plant, employing several hundred people, holding public office and directing the affairs of two banks.

Finally the press of these manifold duties reacted upon me, and I became very nervous. The peculiar thing was that although I felt ill and discouraged and had no desire for food or rest, every doctor I consulted assured me that my health was good. After a good deal of doctoring, which afforded me no relief, I decided to shake off my business responsibilities to a large extent, concern myself with only one bank, the Public State Bank, and occupy the major portion of my time with communal affairs.

I resolved to continue in the manufacturing business only in an advisory capacity, with my sons in active charge, and to draw out therefrom a certain amount of money to be invested in mortgages. The income therefrom, plus dividends from the bank, would be sufficient for my needs. My sons acceded to this plan, and I invested what I withdrew in 5and 6 per cent mortgage bonds from my own bank. Since that time, I have participated less actively in the management of the business, although I still go to the office every day.

Here I want to say that I was fortunate, as a whole, in the sort of people associated with me in business. Most of them have been loyal and cooperative and have remained with us for years. Mr. Vitkin, with his thirty-five years of association, has been with us the longest. Then there was Robert Hutner, now deceased, who was with us for twenty-seven years. David Friedlander was associated with our firm for over twenty-five years, and the following have been with us for ten years or more: Paul Kraemer, Herman Broeker, I. Ziskind, Louis Krueger, Emma Miller, Mary Bressler, who is now Mrs. Savler, Ann Kaplan, who is now Mrs. Musinger, Mrs. C. B. Seal, Miss Helen Chykowska, Herman Nachmann, Mary Gonser, Winnie Mason, Frank Brych, Hyman Waxman, Ben Siegal, Alfred Toma, Paul Weiner, Augusta Kaplan, Helen Klanca and Frank Miller.

We also have in our employ Joe and Harry Horwich, the sons of my oldest brother, Aron, who have proved themselves to be very able and efficient.

I would like to make special mention of Jake Yoselovich, who was with us for about twenty years, until he was killed in a railroad accident, about fifteen years ago. He was very efficient and reliable and an "all around" man. A clever buyer, he did special work in buying raw materials for us. His tragic death was a shock to us, and we felt his loss almost as keenly as did his family.

Of course, some of the people we employed were not altogether satisfactory, but the majority were, and those above-named have been as fine a group of business associates as any man could wish for. I am proud to say that all of the three hundred and fifty persons now in our employ are our friends — and we are their friends, and we get along very nicely.

About two years after I started in the hair business, I took my oldest son, Arthur, in with me, and a year or so later, my second son, Philip, joined us. Both started on a salary. Then I let them become stockholders. Soon after I permitted them to sign checks, and soon they were next to me in authority. When my third son, Theodore, grew up and finished his schooling, he came quite often to the office, visiting, looking around, and sometimes helping on the books or answering letters, until little by little he also good-humoredly elbowed himself into the business. He, too, had to get stock, and likewise became a member of the firm.

As time went on, my sons grew in experience and practical business knowledge, taking over more and more responsibilities, while I kept stepping aside.

In this connection, I am reminded of a clever article I read about thirty-five years ago, in the Jewish Morning Journal of New York, by a writer who used the pseudonym of "Tashrak." He described a scene he had witnessed on a street car late one afternoon, when people were hurrying home from their day's labor.

An elderly Jew, he wrote, got on the car, which was very crowded. The poor man carried bundles under both arms, holding the nickel for carfare in his mouth. Because both of his arms were occupied, he could not hand the nickel to the conductor, and because his face was heavily bewhiskered, the conductor did not see the nickel. When the conductor shouted, "Fares, please!" the hard-pressed fellow was afraid to reply, lest he lose the nickel when he opened his mouth. All he could do was to make a noise through his nose, until the conductor understood him, and pulled the nickel from his mouth.

When this was accomplished, the heavily-loaded passenger had a terrible struggle to push his way into the car. When he finally got in, he stood in the crowd, swaying to the right and to the left, and backward and forward. Not being able to use his arms, he bumped against one passenger and another, and each one made some unpleasant remark. At last a small boy in front of him got up to leave the car, and the old man sat down. The space being very narrow, he could only sit on the edge of the seat. In that unpleasant position, he remained for a while, until he gathered courage and started to move back a little. The passenger next to him, noticing his predicament, pushed a little to the side. He asked the passenger on his other side to do likewise, and now the much-tried man had enough room to sit comfortably. He started to breathe easier, put some of his bundles on his lap, and took out a handkerchief to wipe the sweat from his face. He then looked around on all sides, as though he wished to do something that was not proper but could not make up his mind to it. Finally, after much apparent hesitation, he gathered courage, took out a Jewish newspaper, and started to read it.

The passenger next to him now got up and left, and the old fellow immediately put some of his bundles on the seat. Then he stretched his legs and felt quite comfortable. In a few minutes, the passenger on the other side of him also left, and immediately he placed the rest of his bundles on that seat. So there he was, sitting and reading his paper, with bundles on both sides of him, retaining control of the three seats until he reached his destination.

I write this without any reflection upon my sons. I have all the confidence in the world in them and know that they are well thought of by others. It makes me happy to feel that they were properly raised, properly taken care of and are in business with me, and as long as I am still here in this world, I will always try to be of some help to them.

Two of my grandsons, Leonard (Arthur's son), and Nat Newman (the son of my daughter, Rhea), are now in the business. Although they have been with us a comparatively short time, they show indications of developing into able and progressive young men in the operating of our factories.

I have no doubt that my sons will follow my procedure — in which case my grandsons will eventually be in the same position in which my sons are now, while my sons will be in the same position as I am now. This seems to be a law of life — that the older generation must give way to the vitality of youth.

I am not at all sorry that things have worked out as they have. On the contrary, I am happy to have been able to relinquish to my sons the active management of our enterprise. For one thing, it has taken a great deal of worry from my mind and hard work from my shoulders. It has given me more freedom to interest myself in communal work, which I have always intensely enjoyed. Last, but not least, it has provided me with the necessary leisure to undertake what has turned out to be one of the hardest tasks of my life — the writing of this book.

Quite often people tell me that I have fine children. My own opinion of my children, among whom I include my three daughters-in-law and one son-in-law, is that seven of them are above the average, while two of them are quite exceptional. I leave it to each of them to guess in which category he or she belongs.

My four oldest children married at an early age. Arthur married Lee Sacks, and they have two grown children, Leonard and Jane. Philip married Beatrice Bomash, and they also have two grown children, Franklin and Loretta. Adeline married Bernard Jadwin, and they have two children: David, who is married to Lorraine Weil; and Betty. Rhea married Sam Newman, who passed away a few years ago. She has two boys, Nat and Edward. Theodore, the youngest, married Gertrude Oppenheim, and they have an infant son, James.

It gives me great satisfaction to know that my grandchildren are all fine youngsters. Our relationship is not the usual one of American-born grandchildren toward an old foreign-born grandfather. We understand each other. My regard for their American background and schooling is balanced by their regard for my experience and knowledge of life.

* * *

Helping my family has always been my greatest pleasure. Although I left my parents when I was very young, I began to send them funds within a short time afterward. Two years after I left home, when I was in Germany and my mother came to visit me, I managed to make her a present of a hundred roubles, which was a lot of money at that time. Since then, and until they died, at an advanced age, my parents received help from me, as well as from my brothers, so that they were able to live in comfort to the end of their days. My oldest brother, Aron, also received financial assistance from me until he died.

* * *

It was in the year 1927 that I partially retired from business, and my first thought was to visit Palestine and then proceed to Europe in search of a remedy for my nerves. I was anxious to see what had been accomplished in Palestine during the thirty years of effort that my fellow Zionists and I had given to its promotion and development.

Three days before I left, while walking in the Loop, I stepped on a small object while crossing a street. Looking down, I saw that it was a diamond bracelet, dropped by someone in the hurrying crowd. I picked it up and took it in to a jeweler, to determine whether it was genuine, or just a bauble, and to my surprise, he evaluated it at about $2500.00.

I at once inserted an ad in the Tribune, and left the bracelet with my wife, with instructions that if the properly-identified owner called for it, she should request he pay for the ad, which amounted to $2.90. When I returned from Palestine, I found that the rightful owners, a Mr. and Mrs. Mendelsohn, had claimed the bracelet, and that the insurance company had insisted on leaving a check for $140.00, as a reward, over my wife's objections. This check I used for charitable purposes.

I was reminded by this incident of the time my father had found a hundred roubles, and had "advertised" it through the Rabbi of the town.

My first and only visit to Palestine did not impress me very favorably, so far as the material aspect of the country was concerned. It so happened, unfortunately, that I was there during the year when they were experiencing what we call a "depression." Work was scarce, business was bad, and hundreds of young men were walking the streets with nothing to do, living on the one meal a day they received from a free kitchen. I found, also, that though the soil, after cultivation, produces from two to three crops a year, the process of cultivating it is very tedious, difficult and expensive. Most of it is sand, which has to be covered with black earth, that must be brought from various places. The tropical climate, too, is difficult to accustom oneself to, and it did not seem to me to be particularly healthful. However, my experience is no criterion, as it may be that my age, the state of my health and my general makeup did not permit me to adjust myself easily to the sudden change. After all, there are now in Palestine over 450,000 Jews from European countries and from the United States who seem to get along very well.

From the idealistic standpoint, however, Palestine exerts a strong appeal. There is a certain magnetic charm about it that arouses one's pride and inspiration. I have learned that this feeling is experienced by every Jew on beholding this land. To see the hills of Zion, the River Jordan and the wailing wall! To see in actuality the scenes that one studied about in "cheder"— to visit the graves of the patriarchs of Israel! To behold Mt. Sinai, from which Moses preached the Ten Commandments! To set foot on the Land of the Prophets! One feels himself exalted by all this, and in the presence of something that is holy.

One of the most impressive sights is that presented by the hills of Zion. An almost straight row of hills, of varying heights, their white summits gleaming in the sun, they look like a row of "Kohanim" (Hebrew priests), with prayer shawls over their bowed heads, blessing the congregation.

The young Jews of Palestine, I found, were of a different caliber from any I had known in Europe or America. There is a spirit of independence and comradeship that is unique. Throughout Palestine are settlements called "Kvutzot," or co-operative colonies, where young people live and work together on land they had purchased in common, or leased from the National Fund Organization.

I visited quite a few of these, and found the people to be of a very fine type, independent and fearless, and highly intelligent for the most part. A great many speak three or four languages and are well versed in all phases of human endeavor, have a knowledge of politics, community welfare, progressive education, health and hygiene, and so forth. In some of the colonies, as many as a hundred men, women and children live and work together like one family. They have a big dining room, where they all eat. Some of the women are assigned to the kitchen, others take care of all the children, and the rest work on the land, along with the men.

A common characteristic is their dislike of being shown sympathy or being praised, or being regarded in any way but as friends and equals. We encountered an example of this at the first colony we visited. After making myself known to the man who met us, through our guide and interpreter, we were asked to wait, and in about twenty minutes, the head of the colony, who had been busy milking cows, came to greet us. He asked me in Yiddish what language I preferred to speak, and I told him either Yiddish or English, but inquired as to how many he spoke. He replied that besides those mentioned, he knew German, Hebrew and Russian.

During our conversation, in which he gave me various information about the colony, I took out a cigarette, and he asked for one. It was my habit, on my travels, always to have with me several boxes of American cigarettes to give away, so I offered him a box. This he refused to take, however, saying: "I only want one, because I know I can return one, whereas I cannot return a box, not being in a position to give away boxes of cigarettes." Thus he showed his desire to be strictly on an equal basis with everyone.

I inquired as to his attitude in the matter of religion, and he stated that that was something every man had to decide for himself. "As for myself," he added, "I believe in the Jewish people and in the Jewish land, in the Jewish language and the Jewish moral standard, which is comprised in the statement, 'Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you'."

Replying to my question as to whether they kept the Sabbath and other holidays, he said: "On all such days we do not work; but all the other things proscribed by our Orthodox Rabbis we do not believe in. We drive, we ride horseback, dance, swim, smoke, play, and enjoy the 'Oneg Shabat' (pleasure of the Sabbath)."

Incidentally, he told me, regarding the condescending attitude of many of their visitors, of something that had occurred the day before. He and his wife were conversing with an American who had come from Massachusetts, and the latter mentioned that he was a manufacturer of ladies' dresses, and would like to send the colonist's wife half a dozen dresses, if she would tell him her size and the colors she preferred. While mentioning this, he patronizingly patted the woman on the shoulder, as though to indicate that he, a well-to-do American, was willing to be nice to this poorly dressed Palestinian colonist.

"I do not want any dresses, nor any favors from you," said the woman, "but I do want something else."

"What is that?" inquired the American pleasantly.

"A little more respect," she informed him, and saying goodbye, left him standing there.

* * *

Among the many sights I saw in my travels through Palestine, I was especially impressed when I came across some twenty or more girls sitting in the hot sun, breaking stones. Most of them were nice-looking, healthy appearing girls, and they were singing Hebrew songs while engaged in that terribly hard work.

I waited for nearly half an hour, trying to get to speak to the girl in charge. When she was free to talk to me, I asked her:

"Do you consider this splitting of stones in the hot sun the proper work for girls?"

"This is the kind of work we are doing now," she replied. "We feel well and we are doing it well, and we do not like to talk about it."

When I asked whether there was anything that I could do for them, she replied: "At the moment, I cannot say; but if you will come tomorrow, I will let you know."

I was accompanied on this trip by Mr. David Shapiro, whose son, Jack, is married to a niece of mine. Mr. Shapiro, who was quite a scholar and spoke Hebrew well, had come from Chicago to make his home in Palestine. He suggested, when we left the above-mentioned group, that I go with him to a certain candy factory and order a special candy made there, which is the best to be had, very wholesome, and a favorite with the women of Palestine, and give it to these girls when we returned the next day. It seemed a good idea, and we ordered thirty-five boxes of this rather expensive confection.

When we returned to the group, on the following day, with our cab filled with this candy, we were pained to find that the girls would not even look at it. I tried to persuade them to take it, explaining that purchases of this kind brought money into the country and should be encouraged; also that the candy had been specially ordered for them; that it was healthful food, and that girls in the United States were in the habit of accepting candy from anyone, whether they were rich or poor. My arguments were of no avail. They would not even discuss it.

I finally gave up, and said: "Well, I brought the candy for you, and will leave it here, and you can do with it as you please. If you do not want it, give it away to the children in the school."

On that they all agreed—"for the children in the school." I then asked the girl to whom I had spoken the day before whether she had decided what I could do for the group, and she handed me a letter written in Hebrew. It was an invitation to attend a meeting of the organization composed of some hundred and twenty girls who were engaged in the breaking of stones, stating that they would give me there all the information I wanted; that I could speak to them if I wanted to, and could make some kind of contribution to their organization.

I made the contribution, but did not go to the meeting, partly because I was not particularly pleased with their attitude, and partly because I could not spare the time. However, I made them a counter proposition, saying that if they selected twenty-five girls from among them, I would give them and their escorts a dinner-dance at the hotel. This they also refused.

While I realized that these girls were anxious to assert their independence, I did feel that they were carrying it a little too far.

* * *

One day, while walking along Allenby Road, in Tel Aviv, in the busiest section of the city, I observed an amusing scene. Two rather distinguished looking Jews, with long beards, crossed the street from opposite sides, and on meeting in the middle, stopped right then and there and started a conversation. Traffic is very heavy at this point, and the automobiles, cabs and carriages traveling in both directions had to turn out for these two men, as they stood talking. I watched them nervously, as it seemed certain they would be hit.

Soon a Jewish policeman came up to them and explained that they ought to continue their discussion on the sidewalk, and not in the street. They made some remark I could not hear, and the policeman came over to where I was standing, and waited for a moment to see that they moved. When they gave no evidence of following his advice, he went up to them again, and in a louder voice told them in Yiddish:

"This is dangerous for you and for others. I must insist that you kindly remove yourselves. There is plenty of room on the sidewalk, and you can converse there undisturbed as long as you like."

One of the men, who had a red beard, spoke to the policeman rather curtly, saying:

"Listen, you, I am here thirty-five years, and you have been here only a short time; but you think, because you have that little tin toy attached to your lapel that you can order me around as you please. You are mistaken. Just go and mind your own business."

I expected the young officer to lose his temper at this, but he merely smiled and said:

"Rabbi, I am terribly sorry, but you will have to come along with me to the station, and we will find out who is right and who is wrong."

Taking him by the arm, he led him away, though I tried to intercede. I explained to the policeman that he looked honest and respectable, and was no doubt a Talmudic scholar; that people of that type considered themselves very important, and that he should merely give him a lecture and let him go. But the officer took him away.

On the following afternoon, I happened to meet the same man near my hotel. I spoke to him, asking him what had been the outcome of his dispute with the policeman. He excitedly started to relate how unjustly these policemen were behaving towards the people; that they wanted to treat them here as they had been treated in Russia. He had been taken to the station, he said, and fined twenty piasters, which was equal to one dollar in American money. Not having it with him, he had to telephone someone to bring it, and was then released.

"I am afraid," I said, when he had concluded his story, "that you are exaggerating the situation. After all, it seems to me that the policeman was right. You were standing in the center of the busiest street, and it was for your own good and the good of others that the officer told you to get up on the sidewalk to continue your discussion. Why did you not do as he suggested?"

"You mean I should obey a young radical, an ignoramous who has been here only a few years, and we should interrupt our very important discussion because of him?" he cried indignantly.

"What was your discussion about?" I asked.

"Well," he explained, "I told my friend that the principle of a league of nations, which is called in Yiddish, 'Foelker Bund,' is mentioned in the Talmud, and he denied my statement, and I wanted to prove that he was wrong."

As he started to leave, I called the man back and said to him: "I have a confession to make to you. I am as guilty as you, because I called the attention of the policeman to you two standing there and talking."

"You thought it was all right for me to be arrested?" he asked.

"No," I said, "I did not want you to be arrested, but I was afraid you would be hurt. However, I am willing to make good."

I thereupon took out a five dollar bill and offered it to him.

"Twenty piasters is only one dollar," he said, "so why do you give me five?"

I tried to think of some reason to give him, and said:

"Well, you paid a fine of one dollar. During the time you lost, you might have earned some money, perhaps another dollar. That makes two. And the humiliation of being arrested, and your worry over it, is worth three dollars."

What do you suppose he replied to that?

"One dollar for the fine I paid," he said, "is all right. One dollar for the time I lost is all right, too. But three dollars for my aggravation and for my disgrace is no money at all."

With due apologies, I said: "That is all I think it was worth to you."

He accepted the five dollars, and we parted good friends.

* * *

In traveling from one colony to another, we frequently met Arabs, singly or in groups, walking along or driving their sheep or goats. When we stopped one day at a well, to get some fresh water, we had occasion to observe the sharp contrast in the life led by Oriental and American women.

We came upon an Arab family, consisting of husband, wife and baby. The man was sitting on a donkey, smoking a cigarette and holding a little parasol over his head for protection from the hot sun, while his wife, balancing a jug of water on one shoulder and her child on the other, was compelled to walk alongside.

At the well, also, were a young American Jewish tourist and his wife, who were on their honeymoon. The young woman was obviously very irritated with the Palestinian trip. She refused to drink the water offered her, even refused to get out of the automobile, and complained bitterly of the fact that her husband had taken her there.

Two of the men in my party were Americans, and one of them proposed that we drag the Arab off his donkey, set his wife on it, and make the man carry the jug of water and the child. They made a move to do this, but I called them back, explaining that this was the wrong way to accomplish their purpose. As soon as they were out of sight, I told them, the man would get back on the donkey, and the chances were that he would give his wife a good beating after they got home.

I suggested that our guide talk to the husband and tell him how wrong it was to ride along comfortably, while his wife had to walk beside him with her burdens. It was agreed to try this, and the guide went over and spoke to the Arab, but he paid no attention to what he said, and told everybody to mind their own business.

Author at Wailing Wall, Jerusalem

I then proposed that the three of us each give the Arab woman fifty cents, making a dollar and a half in all. We instructed her to give this to her husband if he would allow her to ride home; but if he refused, she could keep the money for herself. The husband did not get off the donkey, but he did take the child and the water jug, and they went off with the woman trudging alongside. What happened when they got home, of course, we do not know.

While we were discussing this episode, several Palestinian girls arrived with a wagonload of hay drawn by two horses. I engaged them in conversation and said to them:

"You no doubt have noticed the difference between the treatment of women in America and in Palestine. What is your opinion about this?"

"From what I have noticed," observed one of them, "it seems that in America the man is the slave of the woman, while with the Arabs, the women are the slaves of the men. With us, however, the true Palestinians, neither is the slave of the other. We are just as good as the men, and the men are just as good as we are. We do the same work, and want to be treated alike — as human beings — with no difference between us."

One day, while we were driving along, we met three Arabs coming down the road with a herd of sheep. Instead of stopping to let them pass, our driver continued on his way, frightening the sheep so that they ran in all directions. A heated argument ensued between the Arabs and the driver, which we settled by giving them some cigarettes and a few coins. The basis of the argument was that the Arabs claimed they had as much right to the public road as the driver had, and that it was the duty of the latter to stop and let them go by.

I used this story as an illustration in a report I later made, when I mentioned how in other countries the Jews claim that they are just as good as the non-Jews. This, of course, is a vain claim, since the non-Jews do not accept it. To be impelled to make the statement that one is "as good as" another is evidence of a feeling of inferiority on the part of the claimant. Thus, if a wife says that her "strudel" is as sweet as honey, it is obvious that she realizes honey is sweeter; or when a young man boasts that he loves his sweetheart as much as he loves his life, it means that he loves his life better.

In Palestine, the usual attitude is reversed. Here it is the Arabs who claim that they are just "as good as" the Jews, for the creative achievements of the Jews awaken in the Arabs a sense of inadequacy.

* * *

I had spent three weeks in Egypt before coming to Palestine. My first stop was in Alexandria. We drove around the city for about half an hour, and everything was very strange, yet vaguely familiar, through having read about these things in the Bible. The oriental costumes, the veiled women, the market places, were all out of the past.

I visited an ancient synagogue, and although it was a weekday, the synagogue was open. A few men and women were seated outside, on benches. They looked, talked and conducted themselves like Egyptians—there was no trace of anything Jewish about them. I said to them in Hebrew, "Ivrim Atem," meaning, "Are you Hebrews?" At this they all looked up surprised, and started talking to me in Arabic, interspersed with a few Hebrew words.

Outside, everything seemed strange and foreign, but when we all entered the synagogue, I felt at home. There I saw the same prayer books, the same Bible, the same Scrolls and the same kind of Ark as those I was familiar with.

My next stop was Cairo. Here my experience was similar to that in Alexandria. Everything in Cairo was strange, until I entered a synagogue there. As with the Jews of Alexandria, there was nothing about the Jews of Cairo that made them recognizable as such.

It was then I realized, more than ever, that what keeps the scattered Jews of the world together is the Bible, the synagogue, the prayer books; in other words, their religion.

I found little to interest me in Alexandria, but Cairo proved most fascinating, especially in its contrast between modern and ancient modes of living. It abounds in historical associations. I was shown the very spot in the Nile river where Pharoah's daughter was supposed to have found the infant Moses, and this was one of the greatest thrills of the Egyptian trip. When I later visited Mt. Sinai, I remarked to a companion:

"I have seen where the child Moses was drawn from the water, and now I see where he stood when he gave the eternal Ten Commandments to the world."

I viewed the Pyramids, and was carried back thousands of years. I was reminded of Napoleon's remark to his soldiers, when he stood before them.

"Four thousand years of history are looking down upon you," he said.

One of the things that interested me greatly was being shown the place where until comparatively recent years, human sacrifices were thrown into the Nile to prevent it from overflowing. I was told that at the time Napoleon entered Egypt, he was accorded the honor of performing the sacrifice. A young girl, dressed as a bride, was to be thrown into the river. The story goes that he substituted a life-like doll for the girl at the crucial moment. As it happened, the Nile did not overflow that year, and Napoleon was thus able to convince the Egyptians that human sacrifice was not necessary—a likeness of a human being would just as effectively propitiate the river god.

The museum at Cairo, under the control of both England and Egypt, was also most interesting. Excavations carried on by the museum had uncovered, among others, the tomb of the Egyptian Pharoah, Rameses II, who had enslaved the Jews. I saw his mummified form, and the heavy, solid gold coffin in which he had been buried.

As I gazed upon what was left of him, I could not prevent the vagrant thought stealing through my mind that had Moses left the Jews alone, he might have saved himself a great deal of trouble, as well as the Jews throughout the centuries, and millions of Jews today. We would not now be faced with the rather difficult task of trying to convince the world that it should repay us with gratitude, and not unkindness, for the new humanitarianism that Moses taught mankind.

CHAPTER XI

I DRAW A FEW CONCLUSIONS

When I partially withdrew from my business, leaving its active conduct to my sons and continuing chiefly in an advisory capacity, I was very happy in anticipation of the time I would devote to communal work and public affairs, and made memoranda of various plans in this connection.

My hopes were bitterly disappointed when the "depression" suddenly came upon us, altering the course of many lives. Like thousands of others, I was horrified to learn that my "secure" investments were little by little melting away, like ice on a warm day.

I had started to work when I was fourteen years old. From that time on, I managed to save at least a little almost every year. Although some years I just came out even, I never fell behind. It was one of my invariable rules always to have some money to fall back on in case of emergency, and I believed I had provided sufficient security for myself and those who might be dependent upon me.

Now, when I was reaching the age at which most people began counting their days, I was suddenly confronted with the prospect of losing everything I had saved and worked for all my life, and being left penniless. Besides myself, I had two married sons and two married daughters with families to think of. My son-in-law, Sam Newman, who was married to my youngest daughter, Rhea, had been considered well-to-do. He had a fortune in real estate; but during the first years of the depression he lost everything, and his wife and children remained with me. He tried his luck in other cities, where he "knocked about," doing all kinds of hard work, which was too much for him. These difficulties, and worry over his wife and children and the losses he had suffered, undermined his health, and he died not long afterward.

So rapidly did business everywhere begin to decline, and so serious did the general situation become, that I spent many a sleepless and restless night. I became aware, through my own distress, of how desperate and miserable were those poor men who committed suicide under the terrible strain.

I had never been given to speculation, and had always been conservative in financial matters. I had thought that my investments in first mortgage real estate, at less than the current interest rates, about the safest investment possible. Now, day by day, I found my savings slipping away by the thousands of dollars. Real estate and mortgages were becoming almost worthless.

The banks of which I was president were losing more and more money each day. The manufacturing business which supplied a living for my sons and their families was slipping downward at a high speed. Up to that time, my sons and I had worked together, but we were reaching a point where we were about to decide to leave the sinking ship and say, "Each one for himself."

It was certainly a terrible time, and I can recall no more agonizing hours than those I spent during those worst years of the "depression." But as fate decreed, we were able to survive. During my absence from the city, my sons managed to turn over the two banks to a larger bank, with no loss to the depositors. They also began manufacturing a new and different product, distantly connected with our hair business, and this proved successful enough to stop the enormous losses and eventually to make both ends meet.

Here I must say, to the glory of the Jewish bankers in and around Chicago, that with the exception of one very small bank, every Jewish bank liquidated without resorting to a receivership, and paid its depositors one hundred cents on the dollar.

Chief among these was the Foreman Brothers Banking Co., which had been in existence for eighty-five years. When they realized the situation, they turned over their huge bank, with many hundreds of millions of dollars in deposits, to another big national bank, and at the same time, the Foremans turned over their personal fortunes, which amounted to many millions of dollars, in order to protect the depositors from any loss. They themselves — the four members of the firm — were left with absolutely nothing. When the eldest member of the firm, Oscar Foreman, was leaving the bank for the last time, he picked up his hat and cane and remarked: "This is all I take with me." But the depositors were paid in full.

Preceding Mr. Foreman from the conference chambers, where final arrangements had been made, was a prominent, nationally known individual. Questioned as to what had transpired, this man replied:

"The drama, 'The Merchant of Venice,' has just been re-enacted here—but Shylock was not a Jew."

Oscar Foreman died soon after of a broken heart, and the other members of the family had to find other means of earning a livelihood.

Another noteworthy example was the Schiff State Bank, of which B. J. Schiff was president. It had been in existence, I believe, over thirty years. Mr. Schiff could have saved enough assets from the bank at least to keep his family and himself in comfort for the rest of their lives; but he did not do so. He turned over his personal property, and everything he had, to protect the depositors from losing anything. And so with other Jewish bankers. The Hitlerites and their followers ought to take note of this.

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Those people who understand the situation at all know that the "depression," from which we have not yet emerged, was an aftermath of the World War, and that the whole world was affected in the same way, some countries more so than others. Nevertheless, the blame for our troubles was placed on the shoulders of the much-misunderstood Herbert Hoover, who was then president. People are still afraid to mention his name; yet before he became president, he was considered to be a statesman, diplomat and great organizer, and a truly great man. As food administrator for the war-stricken countries, Mr. Hoover was lauded for having done marvelous work.

I had always, in general, looked upon national leaders as highly superior men. Impressed with what I had read and heard about the greatness of Bismarck, Disraeli, Gladstone and other such famous leaders and statesmen, I had come to believe that the heads of nations or others holding high national office were necessarily men of exceptional intelligence and education, possessed of extraordinary ability. I had the utmost admiration and respect for them.

But I was sadly disillusioned during the astonishing developments of the World War period. Watching the turn of events, I came to the painful realization that these men were no different from the everyday run of men. Many of them, I now saw, rated below a good business man, an able industrialist, a professional man, or anyone of fair intelligence.

I was particularly conscious of this fact when, about this time, I listened to an address delivered not by a statesman or a diplomat or one who speaks for a nation — but by one of our rabbis, whose name is Solomon B. Freehof. His address was devoted to an analysis of the political, economic and religious changes that had taken place in Russia. In short, striking phrases, he so brilliantly described each important change that the audience followed him spellbound. By his clear and lucid explanation, he drew for us so vivid a picture of the new Russia, that everyone understood the situation perfectly.

Following the Rabbi's talk, which took but forty minutes, I joined a group enthusiastically discussing his remarkable and comprehensive address. Among them was the late Mr. Leo F.

Wormser, who was acknowledged to possess a brilliant mind and was one of the outstanding lawyers of Chicago. In commenting on the lecture we had just heard, he remarked to us, and all present agreed with him, that no statesman anywhere could possibly have presented the new Russia one-tenth so well in hours as Rabbi Freehof had done in a brief forty minutes.

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Ever since my arrival in this country, about sixty years ago, I have always felt that the national leaders of the Republican party were superior to the leaders of the Democratic party, and I am now more fully convinced than ever of this fact.

During this time, we have had eleven presidents, eight of whom were Republicans and three of whom have been Democrats. All the Republican administrations, with the exception of that of Hoover, were marked by no untoward event. As a whole, they ran along smoothly, some a little better than others. We can really look upon them as representing the Golden Age of the United States. Under them, the country grew in population, prosperity and contentment. On the other hand, under the three Democratic administrations of two terms each, these normal conditions were disturbed. Each Democratic president had some new plan or idea to carry out, which I am sorry to say, was not for the better, but for the worse.

I have come to the realization that the people in general have been led by the Democratic leaders to believe that the Republican party is composed of the rich; that it caters to the rich and represents the rich, while the Democratic party comprises and represents the poor people, especially the working class. The national leaders of the Democratic party have always posed as the representatives and the protectors of the workers and the poor against their enemies, the people of wealth. Up to the time of the present administration, it is a fact that all classes of people in the country prospered more greatly and were much happier under Republican rule than under the Democratic regime.

About three years after I came to this country, Grover Cleveland was elected president. Though he was considered an able man and utterly sincere, he advocated the philosophy of free trade, under which various goods and materials, with some exceptions, are permitted to enter the country free of duty. No sooner was he fairly settled in the White House, than he began to carry this free trade policy into effect, and thus brought on hard times, manifested in what was then called a "panic."

I had a small business at that time, and people came to me looking for jobs for from sixty to seventy-five cents a day. There were strikes and troubles of all kinds, and the hard times continued until the end of Cleveland's term. He ran again, against Benjamin Harrison, a Republican, and was defeated. For four years, everything ran smoothly; but as luck would have it, Cleveland was then elected for another term, and we had four more years of hard times. Though not comparable to our current "depression," there was a large number of unemployed, and wages were the lowest that I can remember.

When that term was ended, it was the general opinion that the National Democratic party could take a long rest. For the next sixteen years, under Republican administration, the country was in a healthy, prosperous condition; but unfortunately, in 1912, because of a split in the Republican party, and through sheer luck, Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat, was elected president.

Mr. Wilson was then considered to be one of the great intellects and great statesmen of the world. Though he also pursued the policy of free trade, the World War broke out before the country could be affected by his policies one way or the other, and because of the war, we got along very well as far as business and financial conditions were concerned, for the time being. It is my opinion, and I venture to say, the opinion of the majority, that because President Wilson led this country to participate in the war, the Democratic party can be considered responsible for many of the ills from which we now suffer as a result.

When the World War first broke out, the opinion of the Jews in America was rather indefinite. The Jews had suffered so much under the Czarist government of Russia, that they could not wish to see it win. Their attitude toward the Allies, as a rule, was neutral, and the majority hoped that the war would end in some kind of compromise, with Russia greatly weakened.

From the very first, I had my doubts about the philosophy and policy of President Wilson in this connection, and by reason of his speeches and acts before the United States entered the war, I lost all confidence in him. Mr. Wilson embarked on a speaking tour, toward the end of his first term, advocating preparedness, because "the sparks of the European fire were settling on our roofs." That statement, for which there was no sound basis, made many of us suspicious that he was going to lead us into war. The slogan on which he won his re-election was, "He kept us out of the war." I wanted to know why no promise was made by him or one of his responsible representatives that he would *continue* to keep us out of the war. I argued that we were not interested in what he *had* done, but in what he was *going to do*. We heard no assurance of that kind.

During his campaign for re-election, I had occasion to speak in public several times, and often repeated my fear that Mr. Wilson would involve us in the European conflict. I stated that I could not trust him unless he came out with an open promise that he would do nothing to implicate us. Upon being elected to his second term, Mr. Wilson gave notice to Germany that unless she ceased her submarine attacks, the United States would be forced to take steps to stop her. I was then practically convinced that we would be involved in the war, and so asserted to my friends.

I remember one occasion, about six weeks after Mr. Wilson's re-election, when I made this prophecy. I had occasion to visit the home of a Mr. I. Lurya, on Douglas Boulevard, and found there Mr. S. J. Rosenblatt, Mr. Max Korshak, Judge Fisher, and a few others. We talked for a while about community affairs, especially about the Maimonides Hospital, in which we were all very much interested, and finally began discussing politics and the presidential election. The prevailing opinion in the group was the familiar one that only with Wilson in office could we surely avoid being involved in the war, while anyone else would undoubtedly draw us in. However, I was of the opposite opinion, and insisted that President Wilson had acted for a long time as though he would like to see this country take part in the conflict; that now that he was re-elected, I was sure he would drag us in.

Everyone present criticized my remarks in a very unfriendly manner, and Mr. Lurya, who was very excitable, shouted at the top of his voice that it was because I was such a fanatic Republican that I dared make these fantastic, untrue statements. At this point, Mr. Lurya's daughter came over to me and whispered that I should not continue the argument, as her father was a sick man and it was dangerous for him to become excited. I thereupon smilingly admonished Mr. Lurya to "cool off," and said we would not talk any more about the matter.

While writing this book, I made it a point to ask Judge Fisher whether he remembered the incident, and he told me that he did. I do not dwell upon this for the purpose of boasting, but merely to prove how an entire nation can be swayed by one clever man, who knows what to say, and how to say it, at the proper time.

The Democratic spellbinders continued to hammer away that Wilson must be re-elected, or we would be dragged into the war. It seemed that fate decreed it so. Because of a slight error made by his opponent, Wilson captured the state of California by several hundred votes, and this won him the election. A short time afterward, the United States joined the Allies, and thereupon conducted itself as though it were surrounded by enemies and was in imminent danger of being wiped out of existence. This excited attitude was assumed in spite of the fact that Germany had already been at war for over three years; that she was fighting against some eighteen nations, among them the greatest powers in the world; and that she was so completely encircled that she could secure no food from outside sources, and the whole nation was starving.

Immediately our country was flooded with tens of thousands of government spies; orators by the thousands were let loose to preach propaganda against Germany. The "Four Minute Men" exerted their imaginations to the utmost to spread hatred against that country. In restaurants, in theaters, in moving picture houses, everywhere, these men advocated the destruction of German militarism—if not, "America is lost." Willingly or unwillingly, these men were granted a hearing wherever and whenever they appeared.

I remember one evening, in a "movie" theater, the picture was suddenly interrupted, and a little fellow with a shrill voice got up on the stage and faced us arrogantly.

"People of America," he cried, "here you are, enjoying life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness — but on the other side of the ocean there is a man with an army behind him, who is trying to conquer the world and destroy us!" He belabored the Kaiser, his generals and his army, and then began to describe how innocent old men, women and children were being slaughtered in the most inhuman manner, by the invading soldiers.

I could not imagine how presumably sensible people and liberal men could tell such brutal stories, which they knew were not true. I used to cover my ears, so as not to listen to this vicious propaganda.

This sort of thing kept up until the war was won, victory was ours, and our American war leaders were proclaimed as great heroes. What was their magnificent accomplishment? With 125,000,000 people behind them, with enormous wealth of material at their command, and unlimited supplies of food, they had helped some eighteen other nations, with a population totaling around 500,000,000, conquer an already exhausted Germany and Austria, with a population of about 100,000,000.

But that is not all. When victory had been achieved, the governments of all these nations were busy for nine months devising plans for squeezing the last drop of blood out of a conquered, prostrated, starving, helpless people. All the assertions that had been made by our government, that "we are not after the German people, only after the Kaiser and the military clique," and that "we want peace without victory," were forgotten and ceased to be mentioned.

But as fate decreed, the saying of the Talmud, "If you want to grasp too much, then you grasp little," applied here. The representatives of the various nations, sitting in judgment on Germany and Austria, overreached themselves in their harsh treatment — so much so, that by the end of the following year, the sympathy of the people of all countries had turned in favor of Germany, as a result of the unforgivable peace treaty that was signed at Versailles.

How different had been Germany's conduct in a like situation! These people, whom the propagandists had called "Huns and barbarians" knew how to deal humanely with a vanquished foe. In 1871, Germany had won a war with France, which had been declared by France. When the peace treaty was drawn up, representatives of *both* sides assembled. It took them a comparatively short time, perhaps a few weeks, to agree on terms. It was provided that France pay war indemnities, and the sum of five billion francs, or one billion dollars, was determined upon. Though at that time this was, of course, a tremendous sum of money, it nevertheless could not have been too burdensome upon the French people, as they managed to pay it in less than two years — and then they were through.

As soon as France had capitulated, the German "barbarians" despatched train-loads of food to Paris and other large centers of France. They also offered to help the French government bring order out of the chaotic condition resulting from the war, although France did not accept this offer.

At the drawing up of the Versailles treaty, on the other hand, although the German army had surrendered and was dissolved and was helpless, the Kaiser had abdicated and fled to Holland and a democratic form of government was organized as dictated by President Wilson, the blockade of Germany was continued and during the nine months the powers were negotiating, the Germans could not receive food from the neutral countries. As a result, starvation conditions prevailed throughout most of the country.

Austria-Hungary, Bohemia, Slovakia, and a few other nationalities had lived together in peace and harmony for some two hundred and fifty years. They were joined under a mild monarchical form of government, with a parliament, the members of which were chosen from among all the different nationalities. The seat of the government was in Vienna.

Upon this harmonious group was forced "self-determination," with the aid of a few interested officeholders, and without ascertaining whether the people themselves wanted it or not. This phrase, coined by President Wilson, provided that each group of people had the right to form its own national government. In this instance, this action, as dictated by the Versailles Treaty, without recourse to a referendum, was comparable to tearing apart the members of a happy family and leaving each one to its own fate.

The Munich scandal, whereby Bohemia, Slovakia, Moravia and other small countries were swallowed by Hitler, and which outraged the world, was an outcome of that disastrous treaty, a further result of which was that about 350,000 Jews were thus added to the 500,000 in Germany, to undergo the same terrible persecutions.

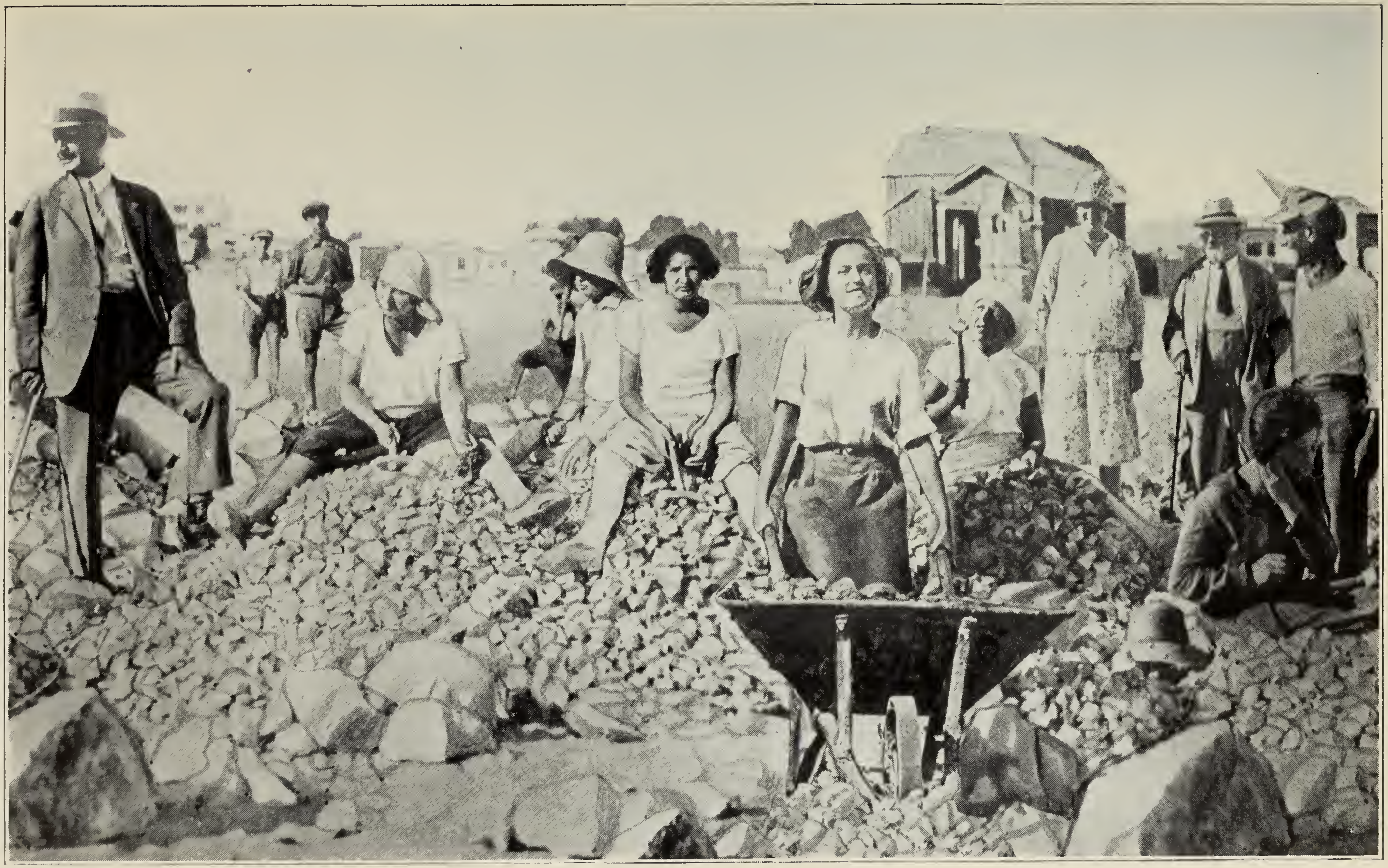
Had it not been for the Versailles Treaty, we would not now be faced with the fact that a nation of slaves and barbarians is being reared in Germany — constituting a threat to the entire civilized world.

In drafting the peace treaty, none of the representatives of either Germany or Austria were called in; but after everything was ready, they were notified to come and sign, and were given a few days' time to say "yes" or "no."

When the people of the world realized what had been done, a reaction set in, and offers of assistance poured in, even from the countries that had been at war with Germany. The result was that Germany received, from these sources, enough money not only to pay most of its reparations to the various governments, but to enable it to build itself up again almost to a better status than had been the case before the war — that is, from a material point of view.

From the political viewpoint, however, the democratic form of government that was foisted upon them, contrary to their wishes, to "make the world safe for democracy," defeated its purpose, and enabled Hitler, with his party, to capture control of the German nation. Now, instead of a Kaiser, under whom the German nation, Jews and non-Jews, prospered and was considered to be one of the most cultured countries in the world, with the type of government best suited to the needs of the German people, they are ruled by one man, before whom the whole world cringes in fear.

Contrary to general opinion, the Kaiser was not an autocrat, as we now understand the term. His decisions and requests for any appropriations whatsoever were subject to approval by the Reichstag, which was a representative body at that time, and he



Author Visiting Group of Girls Breaking Stone for Road-Building at Tel Aviv, Palestine.

could not declare war without the consent of the heads of the various German states.

Representative Germans today, among whom are scientists, scholars, professors, and other men of prominence, Jews and non-Jews alike, give us to understand that the great majority of the German people would be only too happy to see the Kaiser restored, with the same form of government they had before the war, and in my opinion this is the general attitude of world leaders today.

Most of the social problems with which our government is struggling today were satisfactorily worked out in Germany long before the war. They had instituted all the social reforms which have just recently been adopted by our government, such as old age pensions, unemployment relief, sick benefits, etc. The rights of the workers, of the so-called under-privileged and of the "forgotten man" had been established in Germany under the Kaiser, without any hullabaloo. If I am not mistaken, the first labor union in Europe was organized in that country. The strongest organization of labor in the world existed in Germany, under the Kaiser, with a membership of about ten million workers. The Socialist party in the Reichstag was one of the strongest in the country. Open preaching of class hatred, or racial or religious intolerance, was unknown. The most influential group of Jews in the world were the Jews of Germany.

When the Duke of Windsor, the former King of England, visited Germany, he was surprised to find that there were no slums there, and a few years before the war, Lloyd George, war premier, spoke about following the example of Germany in social welfare.

In forcing Germany to accept a republican form of government, democracy has not only not been made "safe," but the countries with democratic forms of government have been made most unsafe, and the world is now experiencing the greatest flood of dangerous propaganda in its history, a flood which is spreading the dogmas of Fascism, Naziism and Communism in every country on earth, including the United States.

It is regrettable that due to Hitler's outrages against Jews and others, the German people as a whole are held responsible by many for his brutality, and have come to be looked upon as hateful and vicious. So firmly is this unjust opinion held by a great number, that any defense of the German people in general is viewed with scorn and contempt. How sad it is that the great majority of well meaning Germans should be bitterly maligned because of a wicked government, whose ringleaders and henchmen are comparatively small in number, and in no way represent the fine qualities of the German people.

Strangely analagous is the situation of the Jews of the world. Because here and there a few of us may be objectionable, a hue and cry is raised against all of us, and we are all made to suffer thereby. We, of all people, should understand the plight of those among the Germans who are innocent of evil. Instead of blaming them, we should sympathize with them, that they have to put up with such a cruel and vicious government.

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During the time of the World War, the Zionist organization all over the world languished and almost ceased to function, except in the United States. Here a Provisional Committee consisting of about forty prominent men was organized by Louis D. Brandeis and Judge Julian W. Mack, with Judge Mack at the head, to keep the movement alive. This committee bore all the expense of carrying on the work of the organization during this time. When Mr. Brandeis was appointed a member of the Supreme Court of the United States, he could not attend public meetings of the Zionist organization or take too active a part in its work. It was known, nevertheless, that he was the backbone of the Provisional Committee.

If not for him, the chances are that the Balfour Declaration would not have been proclaimed. I received this information from reliable sources while in Europe. It seems that after the Balfour Declaration had been framed and approved at a meeting of the cabinet of the British Government, one of the members made a motion to postpone the matter for the present. That meant that it would never see the light again. On the same day word of this was transmitted to Justice Brandeis, he prevailed upon President Wilson to insist that the proclamation be issued at once; and a few days later his famous letter, containing the Balfour Declaration, was delivered to Baron Rothschild and was published.

Soon after the Armistice, a special conference was called by the Zionist Organization, in Europe, at which were present Justice Brandeis, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, Mr. Ussishkin and other leading Zionists. What actually happened there is not definitely known, but this much is known:

Before the meeting opened, Judge Brandeis conferred with Dr. Weizmann and other leading European Zionists and submitted to them a full program of future activities that he felt should be taken up at the meeting, to which they all agreed. But when the meeting was held, with Dr. Weizmann presiding, the entire program of Brandeis was disregarded and was not even mentioned.

Later, I believe it was in June, 1921, a convention of the Zionist Organization was held at Cleveland, Ohio, and was attended by three leading European Zionists, Dr. Weizmann, Mr. Ussishkin and Dr. Schmarya Levin. From what transpired, I learned that from the beginning the purpose of this convention had been to oust Brandeis and his group, and this was accomplished in a very crude manner. He and the other members of the Provisional Committee were represented to the convention as not being the type of Jews that fitted in with national or political Zionism, as, it was asserted, they did not practice traditional Judaism, did not know Hebrew, and leaned toward assimilation.

When the report of the President of the Provisional Committee, Judge Julian W. Mack, was presented, one of the leading American Zionists of the Weizmann group took the platform and denounced it, paraphrasing in this connection a sentence from the prophets: "From foot to head there is not a sound or healthy part — everything is unsound and decayed."

For several days the discussions and arguments continued. At one of the sessions, I remember, Prof. Felix Frankfurter took the platform, but did not have a chance to speak his mind. He was interrupted every few minutes by irrelevant questions that could not be answered, such as "What did you say in 1919?" or "What was your policy three years ago?" He did not have the opportunity to state his case properly.

The result of all this was that a motion of "No confidence in the Provisional Committee" was carried. The entire Committee of about forty members, including among them some of the best known men in the United States, who had kept the movement alive during the trying days of the war, had to resign. They all left the organization, and the leadership was thereupon taken over by the Weizmann group. The Brandeis group then formed the Palestine Economic Corporation, which acts independently, and takes little part in the political aspects of Zionism.

From the Cleveland convention, Dr. Weizmann, Mr. Ussishkin and Dr. Schmarya Levin came to Chicago. I was chairman of the reception committee, and we arranged in their honor a parade of various organizations, with music and flags. The aldermanic council passed a resolution giving the freedom of the city to Dr. Weizmann and his associates. William Hale Thompson, who was then mayor, accepted an invitation to speak at a reception to be given for them, after the parade. This parade, I remember, lasted so long that the Mayor had to wait for over an hour before we arrived at the special platform erected for the purpose on Douglas Boulevard, facing the park.

In opening the program, I introduced Dr. Weizmann as the "King of Schnorrers," explaining that he went around "schnorring" (begging) not from individuals, but from governments, and that he did not "schnorr" for individuals, but for the Jewish people. I added that he had been well received by all nations of Europe; that the only people who had not so far responded wholeheartedly were the Jewish people. I was a little afraid, after I made this remark, that it might not have been diplomatic, but was reassured when at the banquet which followed, Dr. Weizmann used these same words.

It was a great mistake, I feel, that was made at the Cleveland convention, in "reading out" the members of the Provisional Committee. Had the leadership remained in their hands, or had there been true cooperation between the two factions, the situation in Palestine, I am sure, would have been a great deal better than it now is. Among the members of that committee were practical men, men possessing great understanding of world affairs, and also men of great learning. Now the Jewish press of the United States expresses itself as proud and happy that Frankfurter was appointed to the Supreme Court, extolling his greatness, and at every birthday of Justice Brandeis, the entire press of the country, especially the Jewish press, does homage to this great man.

I felt very disappointed that such men as Louis Lipsky, Abe Goldberg and Jacob Fishman (of the New York Jewish Morning Journal) should have joined in forcing out the Brandeis-Mack group. In spite of this unexplainable action on their part, however, I consider them to be among the most able, sensible and best qualified men in the movement today.

At the subsequent Zionist Congress, held at Carlsbad, wishing to bring about a better feeling between the two opposing factions, I drew up a resolution. It embodied a vote of thanks for the fine work the Mack-Brandeis group had done during the war. Before introducing it, I notified Dr. Weizmann of my intention, but he vetoed the suggestion on the grounds that my resolution "would be misunderstood."

Under the direction of men of the caliber of Brandeis and Mack, events would surely have shaped themselves differently, and the Zionist Organization would have undoubtedly functioned more efficiently.

Soon after the Balfour Declaration was proclaimed, for example, there was an influx of Jews into Palestine from all parts of the world. This took place without system or control. No one checked as to who the newcomers were, or what they intended to do there. It did not seem to dawn upon the Zionist leaders that European Jews on coming to Palestine found themselves in a strange land, with a strange people — a strange environment, with a different climate and different civilization from what they had known, and therefore needed advice and guidance. People simply came, and acclimated themselves as best they could. It was everyone for himself.

All they knew was the propaganda they were fed — that "this is our land, which has been promised to us," "this is our Home," "this belongs to us." The leaders might have taken advice and instruction from the English Colonization Bureau on how to settle people in foreign countries with a different civilization. They would have learned that the first thing to do was to gain the friendship of the native inhabitants and win their confidence. Thus a great deal of the ensuing friction could have been avoided.

To the comments that may be made that this is "hindsight" on my part, I wish to affirm that as long as twelve years ago, on my return from my trip to Palestine, I called the attention of Mr. Louis Lipsky, then and still one of the leaders of World Zionism, to these matters. I suggested to him that a special branch of the Zionist Organization be opened in Palestine, whose function it would be to bring about a better understanding between the Jews and the Arabs. I proposed to several active Zionists that leaflets be issued, and a newspaper published, in the language of the Arabs, explaining to the Arab masses that we were their friends, and not their enemies — that their true enemies were to be found among their own — among the Arab land barons who wished to exploit them; that the Jews were bringing wealth into the country, which would result in more comforts and higher wages and better living conditions for them.

I admitted that the cost of thus educating the native population would come to about forty or fifty thousand dollars a year, but argued that since we were raising millions every year for the Keren Hayesod, it would be worth while to spend forty or fifty thousand a year for this purpose. But the only reply I received was: "It's too bad, but we haven't got money for it."

I also mentioned the matter to Mr. Sokolow, one of the finest and most sensible of men, and one of the greatest intellects of our times.

"This plan has to originate from the head of the organization," he advised me. "If someone else proposes it, it will not be listened to."

Judge Harry M. Fisher, who was in Palestine the year preceding my visit, informed me that he felt the same way about the situation as I did and had spoken about it to Dr. Weizmann, but had received an evasive answer.

The same tactics were employed when the proposal of the partition of Palestine was made by England to the Zionist leaders. I feel that an important matter of that sort should have been handled with the utmost care, and full consideration given it before any public statement was made by those speaking with authority. But this was not done. No sooner had England made the offer of a certain part of Palestine to be allotted to the Jews, with the privilege of forming their own state, under the protection of England, than a flood of insults was hurled against her.

Some termed it "the great betrayal"; some shouted, "We were sold out," and many addressed England in harsh terms.

I considered these methods wrong at the time, and am still of that opinion. During this period, I wrote a long article on the subject, setting forth my views, which was subsequently published.

In proposing partition, England committed herself to the statement that "Jewish National Home" meant a self-governing Jewish state. As a matter of fact, the term, "Jewish National Home" had never been clearly defined by any of our leaders. Every Zionist leader explained it in a different way, usually very vaguely.

Even Mr. Norman Bentwich, for many years attorney general for the English government in Palestine, and who should certainly have been able to do so, could not give us a proper definition. Five or six years ago, he visited Chicago and was given a dinner by the Zionist Organization of this city, at which he spoke. He afterward called for questions, upon which I rose and asked him the meaning of the phrase, "Jewish National Home."

"You can ascertain that," he replied evasively, "if you read my book."

I could not help but comment that if it was necessary to read a book of several hundred pages in order to secure the desired information, there was something wrong with the writer, with the definition or with the phrase.

I was never able to get a satisfactory answer on this point. The only man who clearly declared that the Jewish State meant a full-fledged political state, with its own government, its own laws and its own defense force, was Vladimir Jabotinsky, whom the leaders of Zionism ignored and refused to take seriously.

When the question of partition was taken up at the next World Zionist Congress, it was debated for many days, after which a conclusion was reached which still left the matter open. If I am not mistaken, the English government was informed that the offer in the form in which it was made was unacceptable.

I believe that had the Zionist Organization, representing the Zionists throughout the world, accepted England's proposition then, even with some reservations, we would now have a real and positive claim, because of England's commitment, and I doubt whether England would have acted, as she has now, regarding the Jewish situation in Palestine.

* * *

It is to my great regret that some among our Jewish leaders in this country likewise acted very unwisely when the Hitler regime suddenly and unexpectedly fell upon the Jews like wild beasts.

Since my childhood, I was aware that we Jews were liable to be mistreated, in one way or another. At home I very often heard about "burlakes," which term was applied to the Russian rabble, and about the Cossacks, and listened to accounts of how they sometimes fell upon Jews and robbed and mistreated them. In fact, every night, before we went to sleep, we would barricade our doors heavily, both summer and winter, for fear of assault.

Later on, when I had gone to Germany, I heard of special anti-Jewish laws which existed in Russia, and the German Jews would call conferences to discuss means of remedying the situation. Then, when I came to America, we heard of pogroms in Russia, upon which the American Jews, the English Jews and the German Jews held conferences and used what influence they could, through their business connections and the assistance of their several governments, to alleviate the situation. The worst pogrom was the one in Kishinev, and later on we heard of other pogroms in many of the cities of Russia, which lasted for several days. Occasionally, we heard of outbreaks in other countries, but these were comparatively of little consequence.

At the conferences called on these occasions by our Jewish leaders, many of which I attended, in both Chicago and New

York, discussions were carried on as to the best means of helping the Jews in Russia, and these discussions were concerned chiefly with what influence could be exerted through diplomatic channels and other peaceful means. Nothing was decided without calm and careful deliberation.

Upon the intervention of foreign governments, as urged by the Jewish citizens of those governments, Russia usually expressed her regret, explained that the outrages had been committed by uncontrolled mobs, without the knowledge of the authorities; that the government had intervened to subdue these mobs, and promised to punish the ringleaders.

Thus, by talking things over calmly, when such an emergency arose, and exerting their influence through diplomatic channels, instead of through direct action, our Jewish leaders were, as a rule, able to secure relief and assurances that these things would not happen again.

Under Hitler, it was no longer an irresponsible mob that could be called to account, but the government itself which let loose its fury upon helpless, innocent Jews. The fact that the authority came directly from the government, and that it was the government of a nation which had been extolled as one of the most cultured and enlightened nations of the world, fell like a thunderbolt, not only upon the Jews of Germany themselves, but on Jews and non-Jews everywhere. The press of the world was aroused at this calamity, the like of which had not occurred for hundreds of years.

It was to be expected that in this distressing situation, the leaders of the Jews in this country, or those who considered themselves the leaders, should have carefully discussed the matter from every possible angle, and conferred with other leaders, to determine upon the wisest way to proceed.

Unfortunately, several of these so-called leaders, acting without proper authority, or due consideration, became excited and made use of demonstrations, mass meetings, abuse and slander, and finally the boycott.

There appeared on the scene our "brave" American Jews, our band of Davids, who unafraid and unaided would slay the Nazi giant. The vocal fire-eaters began their barrage of noise, which has continued all these years, with incredible endurance — and with infinite injury to our people.

With threats and defiance, with parade and protest, with frenzy and clamor, these dauntless heroes sharpened and swung in all directions that two-edged sword, the boycott. They gave no heed to the frantic implorings of the German Jews, nor to the discreet advice of persons high in the councils of government. Neither did they consult responsible Jewish organizations which had been in existence for many decades.

"We Jews of America must do something," they shouted, through loud-speakers and headlines. "We must not be 'sha-sha' men, 'mayofesnicks,' cowards, like the assimilators. We must fight to the bitter end."

It did not seem to occur to these shouters that there are different ways of fighting — of gaining one's object. An example of a better method is the one used in connection with the dramatic episode of which we have recently been reading in the newspapers — the tragic predicament of the 907 Jewish men, women and children, fleeing the Nazi inferno, marooned on a ship which carried them from port to port, all refusing them refuge. So desperately hopeless was the situation that several hundred of the passengers formed a secret suicide pact, while several hundred more patrolled the decks to avert any self-destruction. For five weeks this boatload of human beings was tossed about on the high seas, with no hope of haven anywhere.

Who was it that finally persuaded four nations of the world to accept the wanderers, and furnished the necessary funds? Was it these noisy boycotters — the self-styled "fighters for Jewish rights throughout the world"? No! It was the very persons they maligned — those whom they called "Yahudim," cowards, "sha-sha" men. Quietly and without fanfare, the latter went about the business of rescue.

I quote here the cable received from the passengers of the S.S. St. Louis by the American Joint Distribution Committee, expressing their heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to that committee for effecting their deliverance:

June, 1939.

"Morris C. Troper
European Chairman
American Joint Distribution Committee
Paris (France)

"The 907 passengers of St. Louis dangling for last thirteen days between hope and despair received today your liberating message of the 13th June that final arrangements for all passengers have at last been reached. Our gratitude is as immense as the ocean, on which we are now floating since May 13th, first full of hope for a good future and afterwards in the deepest despair. Accept Mr. Chairman for you and for the American Joint Distribution Committee, and last but not least, for the governments of Belgium, Holland, France and England, the deepest and eternal thanks of men, women and children united by the same fate on board the St. Louis.

Committee of Passengers
Joseph, Chairman."

This is an example of accomplishment that should cause the demagogues among us to resolve to mend their ways and heed the advice of these wiser men.

Indeed, it is easy to show heroism from a distance of several thousand miles. The "war" against Hitler was waged with loud campaigns in the largest centers of Jewish population, with mass meetings, street demonstrations, and the public launching of the boycott.

In Chicago, for instance, instead of calling together a dozen outstanding communal leaders for careful planning of action (as had been advised) a "committee" hastily organized a mass meeting. As a spectacle, of a kind, it was a success. By acclamation it was decided to stage a procession through the principal streets, with mass meetings to follow in various sections of the city.

Anyone advising caution was shouted down. The excited people would not listen. I tried to tell the audience at that first meeting that we had positive information from the American Jewish Committee that the Jews in Germany were bitterly opposed to public demonstrations. I tried to explain that the Jewish leaders in Paris, specifically authorized to speak for German Jewry, had telephoned to New York, begging American Jews to refrain from such expressions, since they would only incite the Nazis to greater outrages.

But the audience, egged on by its demagogic leaders, would not hear me. Demonstrations took place in Chicago, New York and many other large cities, and a thrilling time was had by all. By all, that is, except the German Jews. The boycott, publicly proclaimed and promoted, aggravated the crisis manyfold. Whereas, the demonstrations as such were only affronts to the sensitive "Fuehrer" and his aides, the boycott threatened material injury. "Judah has declared war against Germany," shrieked Goebbels. "From now on it is war against all Jews, everywhere."

Goering also early issued a warning. He proclaimed to the German Jews that they would be held responsible for the actions of the American Jews — that if the demonstrations and other measures continued, the Jews in Germany would pay dearly for it.

The political effects of the boycott within the Reich are traceable by all those who will take the trouble to examine the matter. On May 20, 1933, the editor of the New York "Staats-Zeitung," Bernard H. Ridder, a man friendly to the Jews, published in his paper an interview he had with Hitler, during which the latter said: "We seized only some Jews who were identified with Communist, Marxist, or atheistic movements, but the Jews of America have declared a boycott against Germany and now we shall make them pay for it."

Not only the German Jews, but Jews all over the world have been jeopardized. We know that Germany is pouring out millions of dollars for Nazi propaganda in the United States alone. We can only imagine the vast fortune spent in spreading race-hatred in other parts of the world since Hitler declared war on the Jews, "because of the boycott," as he and his lieutenant, Goebbels, have more than once stated.

While our "leaders" have been concentrating on Germany, and heroically attacking Hitler verbally from America, they have shown themselves helpless against the poisonous anti-Semitic propaganda spread by the hundreds of Nazi organizations in this country which have rapidly been springing up. What have they done to stop the spread of the myriads of anti-Jewish leaflets and pamphlets which are being circulated freely in the large population centers of the country, especially in New York City, the stronghold of the boycotters? What did they do about the recent mass meeting of 20,000 Nazis in New York City, where race hatred was openly preached — and what are they doing about Father Coughlin?

These Nazi activities have been strengthened by many American Germans who might have been at least noncommital but who, because of the publicly-declared boycott against their Fatherland, have joined the enemy camp by the thousands. Many million Americans of German blood, whether anti-Hitler or not, know that through the boycott the Fatherland is menaced and the sufferings of its people, their relatives, increased. To expect German-Americans to condone the boycott is therefore to expect the unnatural. Thus, in America, we have millions of Germans, formerly neutral, who are now retaliating against the Jews. Make no mistake about it — whether openly or secretly, directly or indirectly, the "counter-boycott" goes on!

What is particularly sad, is that all the hullabaloo was unnecessary. In reality, a boycott already existed before our "machers," our notoriety seekers, shouted it from the housetops. Most Jews and many non-Jews were spontaneous in their refusal to buy German products. What would have been the wiser course would have been to have helped the non-Jews organize the boycott carefully among those interested and concerned, and not to have blazoned forth and flaunted our leadership.

Signs had not been wanting that world public opinion had been aroused and was having its effect on the Nazi brutes. The press described with horror the outrages committed against the Jews, and the liberal non-Jewish elements condemned the Hitler terror and called for help for its victims.

The widespread concern manifested by governments and peoples, together with the strong stand taken by Cabinet Minister Dr. Schacht, plainly had a restraining effect in this early period. For awhile, a moderation in policy was noticeable. The troubles of German Jewry, though far from over, seemed to be steadily decreasing. There was ground for hoping that in time the hounding and baiting of Jews would die out in the Reich. All observation and reliable information supported this hope. And everyone interested began to feel relieved and encouraged.

In our own country, the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, following representations made to him by Dr. Cyrus Adler, head of the American Jewish Committee, had instructed the American embassy in Berlin to have the consulates in the principal cities of Germany investigate and report to him with a view to extending aid. Later Mr. Hull stated in a letter to Dr. Adler that his reports indicated that the German Government had ordered physical attacks upon Jews stopped, that Hitler and Minister von Papen had appealed to their followers to halt the "hooligan" persecution, on the ground that it was bringing down discredit upon the new regime and seriously embarrassing it in its relations with other countries.

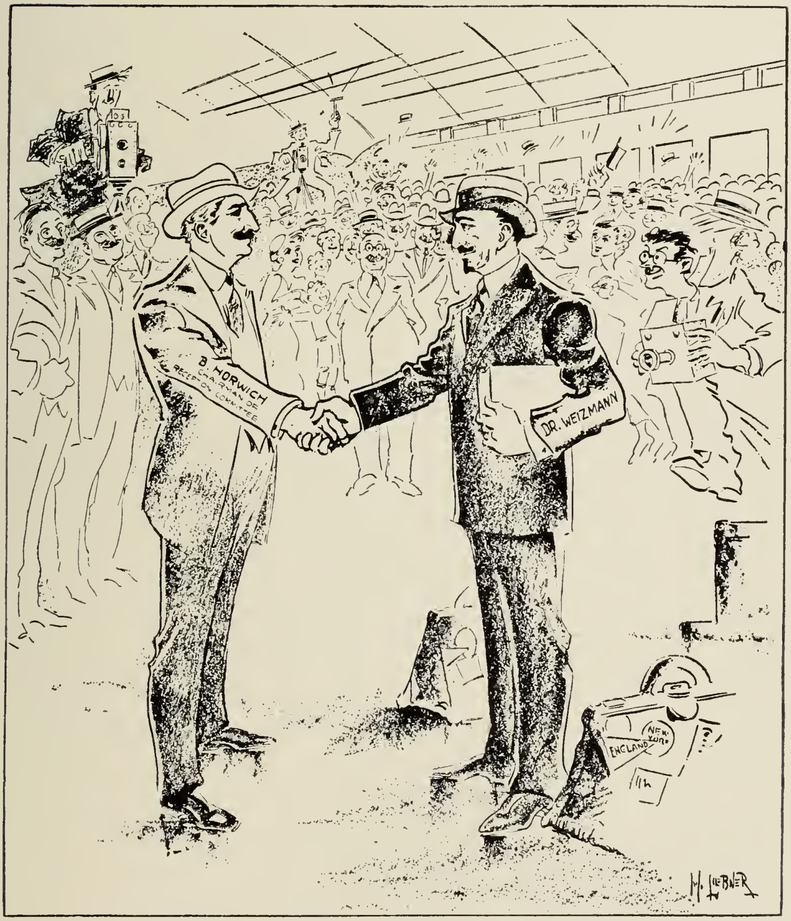
It might be well to mention here, for the information of the reader, some facts about the American Jewish Committee, which has indicated its opposition to the boycott.

This organization has been in existence for thirty-odd years, and has been composed of Jews of the finest type — men of high standing and great influence, men of learning, men prominent in industry and in the professions — men of great responsibility.

The present head of the organization, Dr. Cyrus Adler, is president of Dropsie College, of Philadelphia, president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York, and one of the leaders of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which raised about $125,000,000 to relieve the distress of the war sufferers, following the World War. He is a man whose voice carries weight with our government and with the leading Jews throughout the world. Preceding him in the presidency of the American Jewish Committee was the well-known late Louis Marshall.

This Committee, which was organized after the Kishinev pogrom, has for its purpose the protection of the civil and religious rights of Jews throughout the world, and has direct connections with similar organizations in other countries.

The B'nai B'rith, the oldest Jewish organization in the world, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, also did not approve of the boycott. Many other responsible and prominent groups and individuals, have expressed themselves at one time or another as strongly against the boycott. Among the latter is the well-known scholar and author, Rabbi Solomon Goldman, who is now president of the Zionist Organization of America, and Judge Harry M. Fisher, who had argued that


B. HORWICH
CHAIRMAN OF
RECEPTION COMMITTEE
DR. WEIZMANN
ENGLAND
NEW YORK
M. LIEBNER

Cartoon appearing in a Chicago newspaper, on the occasion of Dr. Chaim Weizmann's visit to this city in the summer of 1921.

through the boycott we were playing into the hands of the Nazis, since this gave them justification for continued persecutions.

From various reliable sources, we had information that the majority of the Germans in Germany were at first opposed to the anti-Semitic policy of the Hitler government; but after the boycott was declared, there was a change of attitude, and these same Germans were led to believe that now the Hitler regime was justified in its program.

Since Hitler's accession to power, several Zionist World Congresses have been held, representing practically all the countries in the world, especially the European countries. At none of these Congresses was any mention made of the boycott, and there was never any indication that the World Zionist Organization was in favor of it. Further, although it was known that Palestine was transacting business with Germany to the extent of about five million dollars a year, no criticism was ever made of these activities at any of the Congresses.

In an article published in the April, 1939, issue of the Cosmopolitan magazine, Karl H. Von Wiegand, famous American foreign correspondent who has known Hitler intimately, writes as follows, concerning interviews he had with him in connection with the Jewish situation:

"Adolph Hitler considers himself at war with World Jewry. Jews, he holds, have attempted to frustrate some of his plans. He maintains that they are responsible for a far-reaching boycott of German goods. It has affected the German export trade. That is striking at *him*.

"There is no 'turning the other cheek' about Hitler. He strikes back. He can strike the sixteen million Jews in the world only through the half million in Germany, so he hits them. Women, children, aged — it matters not. To him there are none innocent if they are Jews. Out of the Reich! Hitler's curse is on them.

"It has been difficult to approach him on the subject of modifying the decrees against the Jews. He becomes infuriated. A large section of opinion in the army is against the persecution of the Jews — not out of love of the Jews but for the very practical reason that it has brought the world down on Germany; that only twenty years after the war Germany is again facing an outraged world. That means nothing to Hitler. Defiance simply steels his determination, his will, an uncontrollable will that is in process of becoming his master.

"Large sections of the German people of all classes from the lowest to the highest, even high functionaries in the Nazi party, have been shocked by some of the decrees against the Jews and by the methods of persecution. The vast majority of Germans want to live at peace and in friendly relations with the world. They desire the world's respect. To those sections, the Jewish persecution is something counterfeit German."

Through personal experience, I am aware of the attitude of the Jews in Germany toward the methods adopted by the Jews in America. I was in Germany in 1933, six months after Hitler had come into power.

It happened to be during the High Holidays, and I attended Yom Kippur services at the Orianenburg Synagogue, in Berlin, which I understand is the largest synagogue in Germany. It holds about thirty-five hundred people. Contrary to the general opinion that all German Jews are Reformed, it is surprising to discover that the services in this great synagogue are conducted along strictly Orthodox lines. The only "Reformed" note is that an organ is used. The prayer books are exactly like those we use in our Orthodox services here, except that they are printed in German on one side and in Hebrew on the other. The men and women do not sit together, the women sitting in the balcony. Both wear head coverings, and the men wear prayer shawls. During the Yom Kippur services, no one leaves his place, but remains the entire day, fasting and praying. I, too, as a visitor, was provided with prayer book and prayer shawl.

I want to emphasize that these were the usual services, as I had witnessed them several times previously in the same synagogue.

On this occasion, Rabbi Warshauer officiated, and the scene was a most sad and impressive one.

"Alas," he said, "many of us are not here to pray with us. Many are missing, innocent victims of untrue accusations. We are charged with all kinds of crimes, which our accusers know to be not true. But it must be the will of Providence, as it is written." And as the entire congregation wept with him, he intoned the age-old chant:

"On the first day of the year it is inscribed, and on the day of atonement the decree is sealed, who shall live and who shall die, who shall perish by fire, and who by water, who by wild beasts and who by the sword, who by hunger and who by thirst, who by strangling and who by stoning, who shall have rest and who shall go wandering."

When he concluded, the floor was actually wet with the silent tears of those gathered there.

So deeply was I affected that I did not sleep that night, and the memory of this heart-rending scene has remained vividly with me.

After the fast and the services, I went to visit the office of the Central Verein in Berlin, which organization represents and speaks for all the Jews in Germany.

I wished to discuss with the leaders of the organization the possibilities of help for them from the American Jews. To my queries, they gave but one answer:

"Let the Jews of America send us financial help for our unemployed and starving. Any other help we do not want — otherwise they cannot help, they can only harm us!"

I urged that there must be some additional way in which we could assist them, but at this, they exclaimed: "For God's sake, tell the American Jews that if they cannot help us financially, they should leave us alone!"

I was amazed at the change that had come over Germany during the six months since Hitler's accession to power. On my previous visit, some nine months before, I had seen happy-looking people moving freely and undisturbed about the streets, busily occupied with their affairs. Now I beheld faces that bore the imprint of anxiety and bewilderment. The people moved about as though in a daze, as though not yet entirely able to grasp the calamity that had befallen them. They spoke to each other in whispers, and regarded their fellows with distrust. This, I may add, was true, not of the Jews only, but of the vast populace of native Germans.

There was no gaiety anywhere — the music had been stilled in restaurants and cafes — and over everything had settled a deadly pall. A definite feeling of tension was in the air, and everyone went about as though dreading what the next moment might bring.

Above all, one sound filled the streets — the sound of marching men. They seemed to be everywhere — always marching, marching.

During my stay of ten days, I was nervous and uneasy, and anxious to get away. Two days before I left Germany, however, a rather pleasant incident occurred, which cheered me a little. I had stopped over in Wuerzburg on business, and finishing around five o'clock, I paused for tea in a cafe. A young man in Nazi uniform suddenly approached my table, and gave the Nazi salute. He asked whether I knew him, and I informed him that I did not. Though not exactly frightened, I must confess I was rather disturbed.

The young man thereupon reminded me that about two years before, he had been standing before the door of that very cafe, one evening, during a heavy rainstorm, when I entered. He had asked my permission to go inside with me, as though accompanying me, so that he might sit for a while in the warm room. I had assented and allowed him to sit with me at my table. Upon hearing his story, that he was penniless, hungry, cold and out of work, and had a sick mother at home, I had ordered food for him and given him two marks with which to buy some food for his mother.

As the youth talked, I recalled the incident. I complimented him on how he had grown since that time, and how manly he now looked. The young man then called over three of his companions, recounted the incident to them, and thanked me, in their presence, for the kindness I had shown him. They all saluted me graciously as they left.

The friendliness of these young fellows relieved to some extent the dreariness I experienced during those ten miserable days in Germany. I could not help but realize, however, what a terrible thing the new regime was doing in taking such decent, friendly youngsters and gradually turning them into brutes, destroying in them all humane feeling.

* * *

The proponents of direct action will protest that the Nazi leadership would have pursued the same murderous course against us no matter what we did or left undone. That is mere speculation. We cannot guess what might have been. But even assuming that the Hitler program could not have been swerved, the question is still whether our boycott has been beneficial or harmful to the Jewish people. I submit that on its record the "Jewish-led" boycott has hurt our people a thousand times more than it has hurt our enemies. Wherever the Nazis have seized power, as in Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, etc., the Jews are suffering torture and death.

Their evil influence has penetrated into other countries, and even into Palestine.

I have termed it a "Jewish-led" boycott. We know that the American Federation of Labor and other groups have at various times declared for an anti-Nazi boycott, and we also know that on the basis of numbers, the Jews cannot be responsible for more than a minor fraction of the resulting reduction in German export trade. But because of the hue and cry raised by the Jewish boycott-leaders, our people have been "credited" with all the economic difficulties resulting, and in reprisal, ever more fiendish schemes have been launched against Germany's Jews.

The boycotters retort, "What would you have us do — take it 'lying down'— allow them to trample on us?" The answer is that it is not "us" but the Jews of Germany who are prostrate and being trampled on. Why were not *they* consulted? They were consistently, frantically opposed, not only to the boycott, but even to protest meetings.

What do we do when a loved one is in the hands of kidnappers? Or when we are held up at the point of a gun? What would you think of the advice to "make a fight of it?" What would you think of the person giving such advice from a safe distance?

Yes, the boycott is a grandiose gesture — but the odds are hopeless. The results are closely analagous to those in the case of a kidnapping or holdup. Let those who urged heroics against our barbaric persecutors consider that the population of Germany is seventy million, with thirty million more Germans in other countries, with a strong, ruthless government behind them, while we Jews total sixteen million, scattered about, disunited, and without government backing. Let our magniloquent defi-hurlers consider another simple fact: England, France, Russia and other powers have repeatedly suffered injury and humiliation from the Nazis.

But because they felt they could not afford a fight, they have not struck back, nor even "talked back."

It is of interest to know that the Catholics did not officially declare a boycott, although they likewise have suffered persecution by Hitler and his followers. Hundreds of nuns and priests were imprisoned, church property confiscated and Catholic schools closed, yet no boycott was advocated. We can surmise what the effect of such a declaration by the Pope would have been on the Hitler regime. I think it can be taken for granted that the reason the Pope refrained from taking such a step was that he feared that by doing so, the welfare of the twenty or twenty-five million Catholics in Germany would be seriously endangered.

The heroics which these great powers cannot afford, we Jews apparently can!

There are those who will say it is easy to be wise after the event — that no one could have foreseen developments. Yet it is not a case of "hindsight." The consequences of the boycott were predicted by those of us who tried to prevent this dangerous blunder. The boycott leaders would not listen and the masses could not hear us because of the din raised by those leaders.

I remember stepping into a boycott meeting over five years ago, where a supply of boycott stamps was being passed out. These were of a violent and ugly character, and I felt it would be a grave mistake to circulate them. I pleaded that they be destroyed and that new stamps be printed merely bearing the words, "For the benefit of German refugees." I offered to pay the cost, amounting to several hundred dollars. But I was overruled. The unsightly stamps, with their aggressive legend and offensive illustration, were widely distributed. I am sure they did incalculable damage.

Oh well, some may say, the boycott leaders meant well. So did the bear who flattened his master's face when he killed a bee on the master's nose.

Why wouldn't they — why won't they — be guided by those who know intimately the situation in Germany, the condition of the German Jews, the make-up of the Nazi overlords and masses?

What is to be done now? Can anything be done? At this writing, of course, it may be too late for anything to help. Yet the situation, in my opinion, might have been alleviated if, earlier, there had been a complete reversal of policy and the boycott and its leaders utterly and entirely repudiated. Whether this would have been of any consequence is problematical. However, we still have nothing to lose, and perhaps much to gain, by even now repudiating the boycott and its instigators.

At any rate, at present, we ought to concentrate on raising money for the needy and oppressed abroad. In addition, constant and untiring effort is necessary to induce governments and groups to intercede *for us,* to ameliorate conditions wherever possible.

Our policy should be one of *defending* and not *offending*. We must regain a demeanor and conduct that will unceasingly appeal to the conscience of the world. We must drop *all* aggressiveness and restore, in its place, our age-old policy of "dignified endurance."

An aggressive policy on our part can only serve to immobilize and even alienate our non-Jewish friends, who might otherwise help through economic, political or educational channels. If we insist on taking things into our own hands, we undo the efforts at "wire-pulling" or diplomatic pressure by "friends at court"— by statesmen or diplomats of nations wielding incomparably greater power and influence than our mistaken leaders can aspire to in the world's affairs.

There is also involved here a factor affecting the masses at large. Though intangible, this factor is of transcendent importance, because in our struggle, the attitude of the world's millions will in the long run prove decisive. When one who is attacked strikes back aggressively, he somehow forfeits the sympathy and aid offered by onlookers to the weak and helpless. Witness the quick proffer of assistance to the child, the aged, the crippled, just because they cannot fight back.

In the history of the last two thousand years, the Jew has never before fought back. His only defense has been prayer and resignation. In that role, against the background of his history and his service to civilization, the Jew has aroused compassion in the finer spirits of mankind, and even among the meaner he commanded a certain respect. That is how he has been enabled to survive. But now, as the self-sufficient and even arrogant killer of giants, he has stepped out of character, and his would-be helpers are constrained to let him find his own salvation.

Our aim is not to destroy Hitlerism, but *to survive it.* We cannot destroy Naziism. That is the world's job, and let us hope it will be accomplished soon.

Alone, as a small fragment of the world's population, we are lost in battle. One of our vital aims must be to reawaken the conscience of others, and in the meantime exercise self-control and silent endurance.

However, there is one weapon we can use — and that is the weapon of propaganda. With all our strength, we should utilize every means to make the accomplishments of the Jews throughout history known to the world, especially their achievements in Germany, in science, music, medicine, literature, etc. And these are legion. For example, it was a non-Jew who said recently, referring to pre-Hitler Germany, that if the Jewish contributions were taken away from Germany, little of its greatness would be left.

That is the sort of fight to which we must devote our energies— a fight *for ourselves,* and not *against* someone else. Therein consists the difference between our present course and the program I am proposing. The latter is the surest road to victory.

The spirit underlying this program is indicated in two little anecdotes with which I shall conclude.

When in January of last year, the Orthodox Rabbis, convened in Atlantic City, publicly wept and prayed for the Jews of Germany, they were far wiser and more practical than those who disdain such "empty words." The impressive proceedings, if earnestly publicized, would accomplish more good than boycott ballyhoo.

In Berlin, on a Jewish holiday, Nazi officials invaded a synagogue and demanded hidden arms. Pointing to the Ark holding the Holy Scrolls, the Rabbi answered, "There you will find our hidden arms, the only weapons the Jews possess."

The verdict of the centuries is with these Rabbis. "They that live by the sword shall perish by the sword." Prayer, patience, endurance, education, are our only effective weapons.

THE END

* * *

I close these memoirs with the sincere hope that the readers of this book have enjoyed accompanying me in these pages through "my first eighty years." Especially do I hope that the present members of my family and their descendants, in reading of these trials and anxieties, of the joys and sorrows of their ancestors, may come to better understand them, and themselves. I shall be greatly pleased if from these recorded experiences they glean something that shall be of value to them in their own lives in the years to come.

Bernard Horwich

SEE NEXT PAGE

ERRATA

(Author deeply regrets the following omissions and errors):

PAGE 354. In listing the names of Harris' children, the name of his son, Louis, was inadvertently omitted. Harris left seven children, not six. Louis Horwich is a worthy son of his brilliant father. By profession he is an architect, although at present he is in the manufacturing business. He is an earnest Hebrew scholar, and in spite of the many demands upon his time, continues his studies. He married Celia Friedlen, a very fine woman, and they have four children.

* * *

In the chapter on Zionism, the author neglected to mention the well known affiliated youth organization, Avukah. This group has branches in universities throughout the country and has a far-reaching cultural program.

* * *

Among the first women active in Zionism was Miss Emilia Jerusalimsky. When but a young girl, she acted as secretary of the original group, the Knights of Zion, and subsequently became president of Clara de Hirsch branch.

* * *

In the chapter on Leading Chicago Zionists, the name of A. Z. Halperin was regrettably omitted. For many years he was an active and valued member of the Zionist Organization, and at one time was chairman of a drive for the Keren Hayesod, raising a large amount of money. He himself has been a liberal contributor to the cause.

* * *

The author neglected to mention Mrs. Minnie Specter, a distant relative, who was also related to the Rabbi Ishaya mentioned in the early part of the book. She is particularly worthy of mention for her fine character, as indicated in her return recently to the author of the sum of $100.00, which he had given to her over twenty-five years ago, when she was in need of assistance. He had neither expected its return, nor did he remember the incident until she recalled it to him.

* * *

The name of Judge Hugo M. Friend, one of our outstanding jurists, should have been included among Chicagoans active in public welfare work.

* * *

PAGE 113. Itze Note is survived by two fine daughters, Hulda Davidson and Minnie Breakstone, both of whom reside in New York. Itze Note had a brother, named Moishe Chaim, who became a prominent dress manufacturer. Those of his children known to the author are: Mrs. Jacob Lunitz, Mrs. Rosa Epstein, and Max Horowitz, of New York.

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PAGE 223. The name, "Abe Klonek" (in the second line from the top) is incorrectly spelled. It should read, "A. J. Clonick."

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PAGE 234. The name, "Abe Kahn," in the 15th line from the top, should be "Ab Cahan."

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PAGE 352. The date of Harris' death should be April 5, 1920.

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